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NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

By

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VOLUME III

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✠ JOHN M. FARLEY,
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NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

Pentecost Monday

HOMILY I

And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To Him all the prophets give testimony, that by His name all receive remission of sins, who believe in Him. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God. Then Peter answered: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they desired him to tarry with them some days.—Epistle, *Acts* x. 42-48.

As you know, the Church celebrates all the great mysteries of faith and ordinarily she follows each such feast with an octave. It is quite natural that in the Mass proper to each of these feasts, and especially in the Epistle and Gospel, she should have read those passages of Sacred Scripture which refer respectively to the several mysteries. It is for this reason that in this second feast of Pentecost,[1] we have in the Epistle

[1]With us in Lombardy, the Monday after Pentecost and also

of the Mass a passage taken from the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, in which is recorded the wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit that took place in the house of Cornelius, the centurion, and which bears a striking resemblance to that which took place in the cenacle, an account of which was read in yesterday's Mass.

I shall not here narrate the particulars that preceded this miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit, for the reason that, if my memory does not fail me, I spoke of these occurrences in the homily of the second feast of Easter. I should also observe that the first two verses of to-day's Epistle are the same as the two last which I interpreted in that homily, and hence I shall pass them over here, so as not to repeat what has already been said, and go on to explain the verses that follow.

"While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard him."

As I have said, St. Peter made an address to the group of Gentiles assembled in the house of Cornelius, the centurion, in which he gave a summary of the Christian teaching, and of which a very short epitome is contained in the Acts written by St. Luke. The Apostle had not yet finished his discourse, when the Holy Spirit came down upon all those Gentiles.

How did He come down upon them? By what sign did those present recognize the effusion of the Holy Spirit? Possibly by the extraordinary

the Monday after Easter are still feasts of precept, and I have thought it well to write a homily each on the Gospel and Epistle of this second feast, instead of Pentecost Sunday. I shall treat of Pentecost in the volumes on the Christian Mysteries.

effects produced, of which the sacred writer goes on to give an account. But it seems to me more consonant with truth to say that this miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit was recognized by those present by some external sign of such a character as to leave no possible doubt of its reality, and probably the Holy Spirit came upon them as He did upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, that is, in the form of fiery tongues. And the Sacred Text seems to imply this, for it immediately goes on to say, that as soon as they received the Holy Ghost, they began to speak in divers tongues and to glorify God, precisely as the apostles did in the cenacle; and, the fact that the effects in both instances were the same, would seem to indicate that the manner in which the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles was the same as that in which He came upon the apostles. But you will ask: How could the Gentiles receive the Holy Ghost before being cleansed and born anew in Baptism? The answer is obvious. Peter had instructed them, faith had sprung up in their hearts, and with faith a perfect sorrow for their sins and an ardent desire to receive Baptism; this faith, this desire, this perfect contrition, justified the Gentiles and rendered them capable and fit to receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit. In their case the same thing took place that takes place in the case of those who, before receiving Baptism and Penance, conceive a perfect sorrow for their sins, and who, therefore, even before being baptized and sacramentally absolved, have obtained pardon for their sins and are fully sanctified by habitual grace.

Why did God see fit to work this visible miracle upon the Gentiles, thus showing that they had been sanctified before they were baptized? A miracle is a derogation from the laws of nature; and while God, being absolute, can do as He likes, He does not work miracles without an adequate reason, and we may reverently inquire what this reason was.

During the years immediately following the foundation of the Church in Jerusalem and in the neighboring countries of Judea and Samaria there was a deeply seated conviction among all the Hebrews converted to Christianity, that the Gospel should be preached solely to Hebrews, and that no Gentile could be received into the Church and be baptized unless he had first been circumcised and professed the Law of Moses. This opinion was manifestly an error; it was contrary to prophecy and to the command of Christ, who said: "Go, teach all nations;" it was contrary to the scope of redemption, which was for all men without distinction. But in those first beginnings the apostles, though they knew perfectly what was true and what was the will of Christ, nevertheless were obliged to proceed with the utmost caution so as not to fly in the face of a national prejudice or put the faith of the Jews already converted to too severe a trial, and thus prevent the conversion of many others.

The apostles very well knew that the Gentiles, quite as well as the Hebrews, were called to a knowledge of the Gospel and to a participation in the benefits of redemption. But when? And how? And on what conditions as regarded the Law of

Moses? Jesus did not determine anything in regard to this matter; He left it all to the prudence and charity of the apostles, and it was but natural that even among them there should have been a diversity of opinion and practice; and it should excite no surprise that the Princes of the apostles, Peter and Paul, at Antioch, were not perfectly agreed, as is clear from the Letter to the Galatians. You should bear in mind, my friends, that inspiration and divine assistance, even among the apostles, did not prevent them from seeing things from different points of view, and did not extend to the single actions of practical life. And from this fact we may learn that even well-meaning and holy men may differ one from the other in opinion and conduct, and that we have no right to affirm that in this they are doing wrong.

The greatest sufferings, or rather persecutions, that St. Peter, and especially St. Paul, had to endure from the Jews, were in consequence of this prejudice, as is clear from the Acts of the Apostles and from the Letters of St. Paul, notably from that to the Galatians. It was therefore absolutely necessary to get rid of this Hebrew prejudice, the intent of which was to restrict the redemption wrought by Christ to the narrow circle of Hebraism, to bind the Gospel to the Mosaic Law, and to circumscribe the universal Church within the narrow limits of the Synagogue. The miracle that took place in the house of Cornelius was divinely ordained to destroy this error. A small group of Gentiles, neither circumcised nor baptized, believing in the Gospel, as announced

by Peter, received the Holy Ghost in a marvelous way, and received Him under the very eyes of the Jews, or the circumcised faithful, "*the faithful of the circumcision,*" who had come in company with Peter to the house of Cornelius.

This solemn and undeniable miracle, which renewed the miracle of Pentecost in favor of the Gentiles, opened the door of the Gospel and of the Church to all Gentiles and lifted the veil of error which hung over the eyes of the Hebrews. What the apostles could not accomplish by their preaching, the Holy Ghost accomplished by a miracle, and the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile was pulled down. The effect of the miracle upon the Jews was great and decisive, as we learn from the following chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and from this verse of to-day's Epistle: "*And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also.*" The furious opposition of the converted Hebrews, it is true, did not cease at once after the miracle; they did not fully and promptly submit to the truth; but the question was settled, and men of good faith little by little laid aside their opposition and truth found an easy entrance into their minds and hearts. God had spoken and it was not possible long to resist.

In the miracle wrought upon Cornelius and upon his relatives and friends gathered at his house, as generally in all miracles, two things are to be considered: the fact, or outward visible sign of the divine action, and the effect which the action produces in the souls of those upon whom it

is wrought. The external fact, or visible sign, of the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles in the cenacle was the tongues of fire, which were seen to sit upon the head of each of them; the effect was that they spoke simultaneously in divers tongues. So also in the present miracle. The external and visible fact, whatever it may have been, was followed immediately in those, who had received the Holy Ghost, by a supernatural effect, namely, they received the gift of tongues and they glorified God, so that there was no doubt that the Holy Spirit was in them.

These extraordinary gifts, and notably that of speaking in unknown tongues, were quite common in the beginning of the Church, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles and from the Letters of St. Paul, and as Jesus Christ had explicitly promised,[1] and hence they were not new to the companions of Peter, nor could they excite that great astonishment, of which the Sacred Text makes mention; but their surprise arose from a fact, not only new to them, but believed to be impossible, that these heavenly gifts were also given to the Gentiles, and that the giving of them was an irrefragable proof that the way of salvation had been opened also to them and that the Law of Moses did not bind them.

Having witnessed this great miracle, St. Peter, as we may suppose, turning to his Hebrew companions, said: *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?"* That is, St. Peter said: "You are witnesses that these Gen-

[1]Mark xvi. 17.

tiles have received the Holy Spirit, as we have; His work is manifest in them; how can you refuse them Baptism? Are we greater than God? Can we oppose His will here so clearly manifested to us? Lay aside your prejudices, then, submit to the voice of God, and understand once for all that Jesus Christ died for all, that the fruit of His redemption is offered to all, to us, to the Jews and to the Gentiles.[1]

Having thus spoken St. Peter "*commanded those Gentiles to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,*" and thus added to the Church. We learn from these words that St. Peter did not himself baptize these new Gentile believers, but directed that they should be baptized by others, probably by those who accompanied him, some of whom were certainly priests. St. Paul[2] did the same, saying that he was sent to preach and not to baptize, in this following the example of Christ, who, we know, delegated the apostles to baptize in His stead.[3]

It is also clear from this passage, as the Church has defined, that water is the matter of Baptism, for the word *water* in this place can mean only natural *water.*

And here some one may ask: "Since Cornelius and the other Gentiles who were with him had received the Holy Ghost and were therefore justified, why was it necessary to baptize them? Was not this useless?"

[1] *Ipsa attestatione rei magnæ* (that is, of the manifestations of the Holy Ghost), *acclamatum est ad Petrum: "Quid de aqua dubitas? jam ego hic sum."*—ST. AUGUSTINE, Hom. xxiii.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 17.

[3] Luke iv. 18.

Although justified, it was not only not useless, but necessary, that they should be baptized. It is true, they were perfectly contrite for their sins and adorned with the grace of God, but precisely because they were contrite and filled with perfect charity, they should obey the divine precept, binding upon all, to receive Baptism. Are those who are perfectly sorry for their sins therefore exempt from the obligation of confessing them and receiving absolution? The fulfilment of this divine law is included in perfect contrition, and follows from it, as an effect follows from a cause.

Moreover, even though those Gentiles had received pardon for their sins and sanctifying grace, they had not received the *character proper* to Baptism, which it was necessary to receive, for without it they could not receive any of the other sacraments.

This verse suggests a doubt which it is as well to examine and clear up. It is this: St. Peter commanded those Gentiles to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; but is Baptism, administered in the name of Jesus Christ, valid? Certainly if to-day a Baptism should be conferred only in the name of Jesus Christ, and not in the name of the three august Persons of the most Holy Trinity, as is the practice of the Church, it would not be valid. Some hold, that in the first years of the Church, by special divine concession and to give all possible honor to the name of Jesus Christ among the faithful, Baptism, though conferred only in the name of Jesus Christ, was *valid;* and they appeal in support of their opinion to this and other similar texts of Holy Writ. But

this opinion, held only by a few, is without foundation and is not necessary for the explanation either of this or of other similar passages. All St. Peter intended to say was that the Baptism of Jesus Christ, or the Baptism instituted by Him, should be administered to those Gentiles, pronouncing at the same time the name of each one of the divine Persons, as He Himself had commanded the apostles to do.[1]

Possibly a better and a more natural explanation of these words of St. Peter is this: Confer Baptism upon those Gentiles; it receives from Jesus Christ, from the merits of His passion and death, the virtue to sanctify souls and is administered *by His command and by the authority or power* that comes from Him alone.

The conversion and Baptism of Cornelius and his companions created great surprise in the Church of Jerusalem, composed almost entirely of converted Hebrews, and they asked of Peter an explanation of the facts which they were on the point of making a ground of a charge against him.[2] Why so? Were these the first Gentiles that were received into the Church? Certainly not. Jesus Christ had praised the faith of another centurion,[3] and that of the Syrophenician woman.[4] He had received Zacheus, who seems also to have been a Gentile; and Philip, the deacon, had baptized the eunuch of the Ethiopean queen, Candace;[5] the conversion and Baptism of

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[2] Acts xi. 1 seq.
[3] Luke vii. 2.
[4] Mark vii. 26.
[5] Acts viii. 26.

the centurion should not, then, have created so much surprise in the Hebrew Christians. Why, then, did it evoke such a clamor that St. Peter was constrained to defend himself, to explain and justify his conduct? This, I fancy, was due to the importance of the fact and to the circumstances connected with it, which deeply wounded the prejudices of the Hebrews.

We see that on the occasion of the Baptism of Cornelius quite a number of the Christians of Jerusalem, and among them some of distinction, set themselves up as judges of St. Peter himself, and later of St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and more or less openly showed their mistrust of them, going so far as to reprove their conduct. Here are inferiors rebuking superiors, and who are these superiors? The apostles, and the Prince of the apostles himself. It was deplorable. It was a most serious disorder. It was a spirit of insubordination, that might have been the beginning of a schism. This fact is a lesson to us, and should teach us not to be surprised or scandalized, if in our day we see here and there in the Church learners who set themselves up as teachers, and those whose duty it is to obey claiming and presuming to sit in judgment upon those whose office and right it is to command.

And here, my friends, allow me to refer to a disregard of an ecclesiastical law not uncommon among us. St. Peter commanded that the Gentiles, who had believed and who had received the Holy Ghost, should be at once baptized. What do we see at present in some parishes and partic-

ularly in those of cities? It is not without pain that we see some parents, who neglect to bring their infants to be baptized, within eight days after their birth, as the Church prescribes, and who put off having them christened for weeks and months for no sufficient reason. What is to be said of such parents? They violate one of the gravest laws of the Church, the purpose of which is to procure for their children the greatest of blessings, the grace of Baptism. Which of you parents would lose a moment, even at the greatest inconvenience to yourselves, to take all necessary legal steps to secure to your children a rich inheritance and a great fortune? In the case of your new-born children there is question of procuring for them the grace of God, the right to possess God Himself, and eternal bliss, and yet without any reason whatever you put off their Baptism for days and weeks, and it may be for months, when to procure them this blessing would cost you neither trouble nor sacrifice of any kind. You should also consider that the life of these infants is exposed to many and serious dangers, and that they sometimes pass away with little or no premonition. Why, then, will you not hasten to procure for them the life of the soul? What anguish and remorse would you parents, and especially you mothers, suffer if by any chance a child of yours should die without having received the grace of Baptism? You observe the civil law, which requires you to register your child within eight days after it is born, and you do right; always do your duty as good citizens. But why are you so solicitous in obeying the laws of men and

so careless in obeying those of the Church?[1] In holy Baptism God enters into the soul of your child and establishes His kingdom there, and would you, by your delay, deprive it of such a blessing? To do so would be at once a wrong to the child and an offense against God. Let none of you bring upon yourselves the guilt of so heinous a sin or give scandal by violating a law of the Church so easily observed and which is the source of so many blessings to the infants whom you so tenderly love.

I shall close this homily by quoting the remaining words of the last verse of the Epistle: "*Then they* (Cornelius and his friends) *desired him* (Peter) *to tarry with them some days.*" Although St. Luke does not say that St. Peter accepted the invitation of these newly baptized Gentiles, it is clear from what he says farther on that the Apostle did accede to their pious wishes and remained with them for some time. St. Peter well knew that for a Jew to accept the hospitality of a Gentile was regarded by his countrymen as a shocking offense, and he foresaw that his doing so would be a scandal to them; still he did not hesitate to stay with these newly converted Gentiles and to console them by his presence; and, moreover, he felt it was necessary by thus remaining among them for a time to make it clear to all that the time had come to open the doors of the Church to the Gentiles, publicly to condemn the prejudices of the converted Hebrews, and to announce by this act that Jews and Gentiles and all men without distinction are called to salvation.

[1]This refers to Italy.—Tr.

HOMILY II

For God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him. He that believeth in Him, is not judged; but he that doth not believe, is already judged, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved: But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.—Gospel, *John* iii. 16-21.

There is no class of persons, no matter how depraved or perverted they may be, among whom may not be found some chosen souls. The sect of the Pharisees was always most hostile to Christ; it hated Him, reviled Him, persecuted Him, and finally put Him to death on the cross. Even among the adherents of this sect Jesus Christ had ardent and loyal disciples; St. Paul was a Pharisee; Gamaliel, his master, was a Pharisee; Nicodemus, a member of the Great Council of Jerusalem, was a Pharisee, who after witnessing the miracles of Christ, went to Him by night, not daring to go by day for fear of the Jews, and begged Him to explain His teaching. Jesus in reply

spoke at length to him, and St. John in the third chapter of his Gospel gives us the leading ideas of the discourse. The passage, just read to you, is taken from the second part of the discourse of Christ to Nicodemus, and will be the subject of this homily, to which I request you to give close attention.

In speaking to Nicodemus Jesus Christ began by insisting on the necessity of being born again in Baptism and of believing in Him, saying, that a day would come when, like the serpent in the desert, He would be lifted up on high for the saving of all who would believe in Him. Jesus Christ then uses those strong and significant words: *"God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son."* You know that in the New Testament the word "world" has many meanings: first, it signifies the earth, or this material world in which we sojourn; next, it signifies wicked men or worldlings, who love with an ill-regulated affection the things of earth; again, it signifies the whole human race, both good and bad, and this is the meaning it bears in the text which we are considering, and which may be thus rendered: *"God so loved the human race."*

Now, my friends, let us consider these words, for they contain a treasure of truth. *"God so loved the human race;"* note the strength and deep meaning of the word *"so."* It expresses the excessive ardor of the love of God for men, or, as St. Paul says, its breadth and length and height and depth; it expresses all the measureless wealth of His charity, great and infinite as He Himself is great and infinite. God has *so* loved men, all

men, all men without exception; He loved them before they were, without any antecedent merit on their part; nay, He loved them in spite of the fact that He foresaw their demerits and their ingratitude; He loved them *so* that He gave them, not only His gifts, but His only-begotten Son to be their pattern and teacher and to satisfy for them His justice. Can a more ardent, a more generous love than this be conceived?

Why is it said here and elsewhere that the Father has given His only-begotten Son? Is the Father greater than the Son, and can He do with the Son as He wills? We know that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are perfectly equal, because they have a common substance; and we know that the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is equally the work of the Three Persons, although accomplished by the Son alone, who alone assumed human nature. The Father is said to have given the Son inasmuch as He begot the Son of Himself, and all that the Son has He receives from the Father; and to the Father, as to the root or origin of the Son, is attributed everything the Son does.

And why has the Father, out of pure love, given His Son to men? *"That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life."* The purpose, then, of this incomparable gift, given us by the Father, is that we may have life. What sort of life? Life everlasting. On what condition? On condition that we believe in Him and translate our faith into works, for faith alone without works is dead.

Let us dwell a little on these words of Jesus:

"That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish." The divine Master requires faith before all things else, and then works. Why does He require faith before everything else and why does He so frequently and so strongly insist on its necessity? Are not works sufficient? Are not works the object of faith and are they not all important? When a man lives uprightly and honestly, what more can be required of him?

Men, being creatures of sense, very frequently ascribe more importance to what they see than to what they do not see, like countrymen who gaze in surprise upon a long train of cars that goes speeding by on the rails and do not even advert to the admirable mechanism by which steam is transmitted and converted into motive power. Whence do good works come? They come from the mind, which first originates them and thinks them out, and next from the will, which executes them. And whence does the mind get the thoughts it transmits to the will? From the light of truth, or in the case of a Christian, from truth illuminated by faith. Faith, then, is the cause and source of good works; it is relatively to good works what the seed is to the plant. It is, therefore, with good reason that Jesus Christ insists so strongly on faith, for it is the principle of good works.

And is not faith itself, or that act by which the mind believes in God, bows reverently before Him and receives His commands, a great, an exalted, a sublime act, although it is not seen? Faith is as far superior to works, as the mind is more noble than the body.

But to return to our explanation. Observe that Jesus Christ does not stop at saying that His purpose and desire is that we should believe, and believing have everlasting life; He expressly declares that He wills not that any one shall perish: *"That whosoever believth in Him may not perish."* It would seem that Jesus Christ feared or suspected that some might think that He did not wish all should enjoy eternal life, and to make the truth more plain He affirms that He does not wish any one to be lost. The words of St. Paul reaffirm the same truth: *"God will have all men to be saved;"* so also those of St. Peter: *"The Lord not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance;"* and again those of Ezechiel: *"As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."* What a joy it is, my friends, to know that Jesus Christ wills all to be saved and wills not that any shall be lost; and that this might be so He became man, suffered, and died for us. Could He do more for us to show His love and His longing desire for our salvation? And if after all we are lost, we can blame only ourselves for so appalling a calamity.

Even these clear, strong words are not sufficient; Jesus Christ thinks it necessary to still further enforce the truth that the object of His coming is not to condemn, but to save men, by others more energetic. He adds: *"For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him."* As you will observe, Jesus Christ repeats substantially, but more explicitly, what He had already said to

Nicodemus, namely, that the object of His coming on earth, was not to judge or to condemn, or to punish, but to save men, which is a fresh confirmation of what I have said concerning the immense charity of God.

Here a difficulty may suggest itself. In the Fifth Chapter of St. John Jesus Christ says that the *"Father hath given Him power to do judgment because He is the Son of man."* Now how can these two passages, seemingly wholly opposed to each other, be reconciled, namely, that *"God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world,"* and that Jesus Christ, because He is the Son of man, has power to judge men? The opposition between the two is only apparent and can easily be explained. Jesus Christ has full power to judge and to punish men, but this power was not to be exercised at His first coming, but at His second, at the end of the world; at His first coming He willed to exercise only His office of redeemer and mediator, not that of judge and chastiser. But another and a better explanation of the passages may be given, and one, too, more in harmony with the mission and character of Christ.

St. John Chrysostom, commenting on the first chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, says very sagaciously that, according to our way of expressing ourselves, there are two wills in God; the first is properly His and belongs to His very nature, and according to this He wills all men to be saved and to be eternally happy; the second is in God, certainly, but is not, like the first, properly His, since we ourselves oblige Him

to have it, and according to this He judges and punishes sinners. Of Himself, God would have only the first will; He has the second indeed, but only because He is, as it were, constrained by men to have it. Thus a father, of himself wishes only good to his children, and if he punishes them, he punishes them against his will and is, as it were, doing violence to himself. The first will is properly the father's and is anterior to any other will; the second is also his will, but it is a will that supervenes to the first; it is imposed upon him by the bad behavior of his children, and would not exist at all if his children did not constrain him to have it. So also with Jesus Christ; He came upon earth and His mission was to save all men without exception and not to judge or punish them, and in this sense He truly said: "*God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world.*" But there are bad and wicked men in the world, who outrage the goodness of God, and justice demands that they shall be punished, and in this sense it is said that the "*Father hath given the Son power to do judgment.*" In other words Jesus Christ of Himself wills not to condemn or punish any one; He wills to exercise only mercy toward all, but men force Him to take upon Himself the duties of a judge and chastiser. These words of Jesus Christ bring out with wonderful clearness the nature of His mission, His benevolence and God-like charity, since He wills only good to men and that they should all be saved.

Still pursuing the same line of argument and driving home this truth, He says: "*He that be-*

lieveth in Him is not judged." Whosoever believes that He is the Messias and the Son of God and with heart and mind embraces His teaching, and conforms his conduct to it, will not be condemned; on the contrary, he will be saved. On the other hand, whosoever does not believe in Him by that very fact separates himself from Him, who is life itself, and is already condemned; as if He would say, there is no need of condemning him, for he condemns himself. One who has sound eyes rejoices in the beauties of nature when the sun floods them with its light. He has only to open his eyes to see and rejoice in the beneficent light of the sun; to shut himself off from this glorious vision and bury himself in darkness, he has only to close his eyes or hide himself away where not a single ray of the sun penetrates. Should he do so, it is not the sun that deprives him of its light and condemns him to darkness; it is his own will. He and he alone wilfully condemns himself to darkness, because the sun continues to shine for others and he, too, might enjoy its light if he would but open his eyes and go out into the sunshine. The unfortunate man who refuses to believe in the Son of God sent on earth, judges himself, precisely because he will not believe in Him and by so doing offers Him an affront, the enormity of which is in proportion to His greatness and dignity.[1]

[1]Magnum crimen incredulitatis esse ostendit, quoniam Unigenitus iste sit filius Dei. Nam quanto præstantius est quod contemnitur, tanto majoribus, qui spernit, suppliciis subjacebit, quia talis mendacem fecit Deum, quia non credit in testimonium, quod testificatus est Deus de Filio suo.—St. Cyrillus Alex., apud à Lapide.

My friends, say that one of you should state a very important fact, which you know with absolute certainty to be true, and that the one to whom you make the statement would say: "I do not believe you." Would not this be a serious reflection upon your honor and veracity? Would it not be saying to you in plain words: "You are ignorant or a fool; you deceive yourself or allow yourself to be deceived; or worse still, you are a liar, and wish to deceive others." Certainly such language is to the last degree insulting and would call for an adequate reparation. Fancy that a servant offered this insult to his master, or a subject to his prince, or a son to his father; the gravity of the offense would in such a case be increased in the measure of the difference between the lowliness and duties of the offender, on the one hand, and of the dignity and rights of the offended on the other. Now apply this rule to those who atrociously insult Jesus Christ, when He says, "I am the Son of God, sent to save the world; I furnish the most irrefragable proofs of My origin in the works that I do, in the predictions of the prophets fulfilled in Me," by replying with sacrilegious audacity: "We do not believe You."

Jesus, continuing His discourse to Nicodemus, explains the true cause of this unbelief, which is the true cause of the judgment and condemnation. "*And this is the judgment, because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, for their works are evil.*" A profound sentence this, and one, too, which gives us the key by which to solve the portentous problem of the unbelief of so many of our brethren in

spite of the irrefragable proofs that shed light upon our religion.

Unbelief, my friends, is an infirmity of the mind, like superstition, fanaticism, ignorance, pride, and so many other weaknesses and passions which afflict and harass our poor nature. It is useless to dissimulate the fact that in our age this infirmity is more widely prevalent than ever before and works horrible havoc with souls. But do not fancy that it is an infirmity of recent origin; no, it is an infirmity of all time, and we find it in the first ages of the Church, and at the very time of Christ. Who were the Sadducees spoken of in the Gospel? They were the epicureans, the materialists, and the unbelievers, who lived peacefully among the Jewish people. Who were the Scribes, the Pharisees, and their followers, who in the Gospel are always represented as the implacable enemies of Jesus Christ? They were the unbelievers of that age; they made war on the teachings of Jesus Christ; they put a perverse sense upon His words; they appealed now to reason and now to the Scripture, in the hope, if possible, of entrapping Him and alienating the people from Him. Now, what is the cause of this stubborn resistance which men offer to truth and faith, and often in the name of science? There are many causes for this strange phenomenon, but the chief one is that spoken of by Christ in that passage of the Gospel which we are considering. Of course the evil seed of unbelief has its roots in the natural pride of man, in his instability, in human respect, in ignorance, and in similar infirmities, and from them, too, it derives its nutriment; but un-

questionably its principal cause must be sought in moral obliquity and in the corruption of the heart. Men doubt the truth of the Gospel and refuse to believe the Creed because they do not wish to observe the Commandments, and they hate religion because they love to indulge their passions. There is in man an insuperable force impelling him to be consistent with himself, to harmonize his principles and his conduct, because inconsistency is insupportable to him, humiliates and dishonors him. To believe that pride is a vice and to be a slave to it; to believe that avarice and injustice are reprehensible and to be guilty of both; to believe that intemperance, luxury, and hatred of one's neighbor are unworthy passions and to encourage them; to believe that there is a hell and to live as if there were none; all this is a manifest contradiction, an outrage upon common-sense, and an incessant struggle against conscience. Sooner or later one must come to terms with oneself, sooner or later the passions must gain the victory over faith or faith over the passions. But when one is steeped in the mire of the passions he can not, he will not, rise from his degradation; he is bound as to a victor's chariot and can not sever the cords that bind him. What is he to do? He ends by yielding to his passions and by suffocating the voice of religion, which is a torment to him and which upbraids him for the evil life he is leading. The light of faith reveals his filthy and shameful deeds, faith spurns and utterly rejects the things upon which he has set his mind and heart. Fancy a deformed woman who is conscious that she is shapeless and ugly

and repulsive, and who by some chance finds herself in a drawing room, brilliantly illuminated and filled with gentlemen and ladies; think you that she will love the light and that she will place herself where it is strongest and most resplendent? Will she not rather hate the light, flee from it, and if possible extinguish it and rejoice at being in darkness? This is just what men do who are guilty of certain vices and who hear the cry of conscience, which scourges them; they try to get rid of faith, to be done with it, for it is ceaselessly reproving and censuring them; *"they love darkness rather than light,"* says Jesus Christ, *"for their works are evil."* This, my friends, is the chief, the pre-eminent cause of unbelief: shameful conduct, the passions that clamor to be gratified; these demolish faith and banish religion. *"For every one that doeth evil,"* says Our Lord again, *"hateth the light and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved."*

The sun is shining clear and bright in the heavens, the eye freely wanders through space and rejoices in the vision of earth and sky, of green fields and flowering meadows, and of mountains that rise superbly toward the clouds. But there comes a change! The sky, that just now seemed a field of sapphire, is gradually being obscured by dark clouds; the sun is hidden, the mountains disappear, and the earth, on which but a moment ago the smile of heaven seemed to rest, awaits in terror the bursting of the storm. Whence came those clouds that covered the earth with darkness and robbed us of the vision of sun and sky? They did not come from the sky, they

did not descend from the stars, or from the sun, which is ever the same, the center of light; they were exhalations from the earth, they rose up from this lower world and shut out the sun; it is the earth itself that robs itself of light. So also is it, my friends, with the passions that find lodgment in our hearts; they are as a thick vapor, clouding the limpid heaven of our minds, illuminated by the sun of faith, whose light they sometimes wholly extinguish, thus leaving us in the dense darkness of unbelief.

So true is this that Our Lord immediately adds these beautiful words: "*But he that loves truth*[1] *comes to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.*" Whosoever follows whither light leads and is docile to the impulse of grace, will give himself to the practice of virtue, and will embrace the truth or the doctrine of Christ, because his works are pleasing to God. Or better still, whosoever seeks truth and sincerely loves it, finds it, because such a one is pleasing to God.[2]

My dear friends, that man is made for truth

[1]This expression "*to do the truth*" is met with more than once in St. John's Gospel and means simply *to do what is right*. What is virtue? It is the putting of truth into practice, just as vice is the putting of error into practice. The expression of St. John is very forcible and profoundly true.

[2]It would seem at first sight that the words of Our Lord here involve a vicious circle. It is certain, that to do good and holy works the truth must first be known. First comes a knowledge of the truth, and then the doing of good works; but here, instead of this, the contrary seems to be stated: He that *doth the truth*, or good works, *cometh to the light*, or knows the doctrine of Jesus Christ and follows it. First he does good works and then believes. This seems to be false, since in the supernatural order good works are begotten of faith. Hence the words of Christ mean that he, who is upright, honestly seeks the truth and finds it.

there is no doubt; he is naturally drawn to truth; but there is another contrary influence that draws him from truth, suggests suspicions concerning it, and inspires hatred of it; this is the influence of the passions, which see in truth their implacable enemy. Placed between these two opposite influences what ought he to do? Spurn his passions and their seductions and courageously hold out the hand to truth and follow whither it leads; being made for truth let him seek it, love it, and prepare his heart for receiving it by casting out from it guilty passion. If by chance your eyes are filled with dust, what do you do? You at once cleanse them, even though it is painful to do so, because you wish to see the light. Do the same with the eye of the mind; purge away the darkness of guilty passions that you may be able to see the light of truth. Never has it been heard that any one sincerely sought truth and found it not, for with us it is a most certain principle that God will never fail to give grace to those who on their part do their full duty. Experience teaches that men feel doubts against religion rising and waxing strong in their minds, sometimes causing the loss of faith, in the measure in which they allow their passions to gain the mastery over them, and enslave them; and that, on the contrary, the love of religion and soundness of faith increase in the measure in which they live good lives and practise virtue. Hence it is clear on the one hand, that vice leads straight to irreligion; and on the other, that virtue leads straight to religion, thus confirming the words of Jesus Christ that he that does truth, or lives blamelessly, comes to the

light.[1] What more decisive proof could there be for faith and religion? He who lives virtuously knows not what religious doubt is, and he is conscious that his faith is ever growing stronger within him; whereas he who lives a bad life is conscious that doubt is little by little springing up in his mind, and he ends by giving up his religion altogether. It is a thing unheard of that any truly virtuous Christian has ever given up the Faith or left the Catholic Church. This is a clear proof that virtue is the friend of religion and that religion is true and divine.

[1]Ostendit (Christus) errantium neminem se fidei subditum, nisi prius rectam sibi vitam persuadeat, et neminem nisi prorsus malitiæ deditum, in incredulitate persiste.—St. Joan. Chrysost., in hunc locum.

First Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY III

DEARLY BELOVED: God is charity. By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity; not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God abideth in us, and His charity is perfected in us. In this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father hath sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the charity which God hath to us. God is charity; and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him. In this is the charity of God perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, we also are in this world. Fear is not in charity; but perfect charity casteth out fear because fear hath pain; and he that feareth is not perfected in charity. Let us therefore love God because God first hath loved us. If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth,

how can he love God whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother.—EPISTLE, 1 *John* iv. 8-21.

IN THE ordinary language of the Church, St. Paul is called pre-eminently the Apostle, the Apostle of the nations, and St. John is called the Apostle of love. This glorious title of Apostle of love is wonderfully appropriate to St. John, whether we consider his personal character or the nature of his teaching as revealed in his writings. These exhale a perfume of benevolence and love toward God and toward our neighbor that pervade the whole soul, gladden it, and leave a conviction that he who wrote those divine pages was verily the Beloved Disciple, whose head lay upon the Heart of Jesus. The passage which I have just read, even taken by itself, would be more than sufficient to confirm his right to this noble title of Apostle of love. Let us together meditate upon this passage, and, as it is somewhat long, we must be as brief as possible; allow me to suggest to you, however, that the truths it contains are of the class that are apprehended by the heart rather than by the intellect.

The apostle St. John, after warning the faithful against believing in every spirit, or every teacher, and after giving them a criterion by which to distinguish the true teacher from the false, and telling them that those who are of God listen not to false teachers, goes on to commend brotherly love. "*God,*" he says, "*is charity.*"

In going through the Sacred Writings we find

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three definitions of God. In the Old Testament the first definition is given in the words, *"I am who am";* that is, He is absolute being; the second is given by Christ in the Gospel, in the words, *"God is truth";* and the third is the one given by St. John in this Epistle, *"God is charity."* The last completes the other two and reveals the innermost life of God. God is love or charity, all love and all charity, as He is all being and all truth, without any mixture of error or any absence of being. All the divine Being, in its every part and fiber, if the word may be allowed, is love, as fire in its every part is hot, and light luminous, and balsam fragrant. God the Father loves the Son with an infinite love, and gives Himself wholly to Him; the Son, in turn, loves the Father with an infinite love and gives Himself back wholly to Him; and this love passing to and fro, is so perfect, that it centers in one Person, the Holy Spirit. God, in His being, has knowledge and power to call into existence countless other beings, and His love, which tends to communicate itself, moves Him to create them, and He creates them and sends forth from Himself a universe which He loves as the work of His hands and loads it with benefits. What is the love of all creatures, of all men, of friends, of fathers and mothers, of saints and angels, but a spark of the divine love, which is variously reflected in all created things, as the light and heat of the sun are poured out upon them? Yes, God is love and nothing but love, and His punishment is love, a love of justice.

But to whom of all created beings has God most

signally shown His love? *"Toward us,"* says the apostle. *"By this hath the charity of God appeared to us."* But in what way particularly? *"Because He hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world."* The gift of His Son, the mystery of the Incarnation, is the most magnificent proof, the everlasting monument of God's charity toward us. And why has He given us His Son in the Incarnation? *"That we may live by Him"*; that is, that we may be reconciled with God, receive the grace which is the life of the soul, and a participation of the very life of God.

Here St. John explains the nature of the charity of God toward us, the chief fruit of which is the Incarnation and all the Incarnation implies. God has loved us and loves us tenderly; and why? Is it because we first loved Him? By no means, says the apostle. He first loved us; He first gave us the Incarnation, the greatest of all blessings; and He first pardoned us our sins. Love, as the poet-philosopher Dante says, inspires the loved one to love: *"Amor che nullo amato amor perdona."*

The surest way to gain love is to show that we love; he loves best who loves first. Now as between God and man, who loved first? God: *"He hath first loved us."* God, sovereignty itself, first bows down to man, loves him, takes him to His heart, and gives him, both in the natural and supernatural order, the most splendid proofs of His love. This is an infinite condescension on the part of God, indeed, but it is also a necessity. We poor creatures can give nothing of our own to God, because we have nothing of our own; we are

simply nothing of ourselves. We can give to God nothing in the order either of nature or of grace, except what we have received from Him.

Before we can love Him, He must give us an intellect to know Him and a heart to love Him; nor is this all. He must present truth to our intellect and pour love into our heart, the same love that we give to Him in turn, so that when we love God, we love Him with the same love wherewith He first loved us. When the tree produces fruit for us, it gives back to us only what we first gave to it in planting and grafting it and caring for it; when the mirror reflects our features, it only reflects what we first gave to it by looking into it; when children love their parents, they only restore a little of the love which parents put into their hearts by first loving them and lavishing kindnesses upon them.

God first loved us, and we love Him in turn with the selfsame love, nor can we help doing so. Place a bright, polished mirror in the rays of the sun, and what is the result? Those brilliant rays are reflected back and upward toward their source; so should our hearts be polished mirrors that send back to God the beams of His love. But instead, what do we frequently do? Frequently, like those obscure bodies that receive and quench the light of the sun, we receive the love of God within us, extinguish it, or ungratefully lavish it upon creatures, thus abusing the greatest of His gifts.

My friends, God, just and holy, good and perfect, first loved us; let us give Him love for love and then the warm sunshine of love that comes

down from Him to us, will go back to Him, and with it we shall also return to Him and be united with Him. It is the nature of love to bind lovers together, and to make them only one; now, how can man and God be united together, if man will not seize the golden chain of love that God holds out to him, if he will not cling to it and thus return love for love? God first loved us and we ought to love Him, but is this enough? No, says St. John. *"My dearest,"* he says, *"if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* God's love toward us, being that of an infinite being, is infinite; but our love, our nature being finite, is also finite, and St. John does not mean that we shall love our neighbor in the measure in which God loves us. The apostle only intends to say that, if the great God loves us with so ardent and active a love, much more ought we wretched creatures love our brethren, who have the same nature as we. God loves us, and the character and intensity of His love are shown by the countless benefits that He lavishes upon us, and our love ought to be in proportion to His favors. God has no need of us; we can bestow upon Him no sort of benefit; He dispenses favors, but He does not receive them; still there is a sense in which He has need of us and in which we can confer favors upon Him. How? Not directly to Himself, but to those in whom He is represented, to our brothers, who bear upon them His image. This is why St. John says: *"If God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another,"* for in loving and serving our brothers, we shall love and serve God Himself, according to the promise of

Christ: "*As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.*"

God, you will say, is Lord and Master of all; He needs nothing; He is absolute being; He gives but He does not receive. And for all that God has needs, and great needs, and we can aid and serve Him. But how? He impersonates Himself in the needy and the suffering; through them He holds out His hand begging alms and aid; Jesus Christ makes Himself poor in the poor, sick in the sick, hungry in the hungry, and He tells us Himself that, in loving and succoring these, we love and succor Him. Who will refuse to succor Our Lord Jesus Christ? Can there be a greater honor or glory than that of giving relief to the Man-God?

This interpretation is confirmed by what follows: "*No man hath seen God at any time.*" As if he would say: "We can not show our love and gratitude to God in a visible and sensible way, because God is a most pure spirit, and is not and can not be seen on this earth; and yet we feel the need of externally manifesting our love and thankfulness to Him. Now here is a way at once easy for all and ready to hand of doing it. God makes Himself visible in men, in His images here on earth, and to them we do those offices of charity which we can not discharge directly to the invisible God; and in this way we at once show our love for Him and satisfy the cravings of our own heart; we love God and our brothers—God, who is invisible, our brothers, who are visible; and thus God will abide with us and charity will reign in our souls and be perfected: "*If we love one an-*

other God abideth in us, and His charity is perfected in us.''

This idea of charity, by which God abides in us and we in God, is repeated by St. John in the next verse in almost the same words, and it will not be amiss to give you a fuller explanation of this truth, taking St. Thomas as our guide.

By charity God abides in us and we in God. How so? Listen. When we know anything whatever, say a tree or a mountain, the tree or the mountain exists in our mind and soul, as anything known exists in him who knows it; the image or the idea of the tree or of the mountain is in our mind, not the tree or the mountain itself, which would be ridiculous and impossible; but it is there in the way in which I say. I see a tree or a mountain, I have it in my mind, though it be far away. Everything that we know is said to exist in the mind, inasmuch as the image and idea of it are in the mind.

Again, we can have an image or an idea of an object in the mind without having it in our will, or without loving it. For example, we can have an image or an idea of a serpent, or of sin, or of the devil, in our mind, but assuredly we do not love such things; but very frequently what we know, and what is therefore in the mind, if we apprehend it as something beautiful and good, is loved by us. Then what happens? The object passes on from the mind to the heart, from the intelligence to the will, and, if the expression may be allowed, the will lovingly embraces it, binds it to itself in the tender bonds of love, makes it its own, and becomes one with it. Then the object exists not

only in the mind, but it passes into the will and into the heart and is both desired and loved. Hence, the expressions of lovers to each other, such as: "I hold you in my heart; you have your place here; here you reign;" and the like, are most true and according to knowledge. If two persons truly love one another, the one lives in the other, the one abides in the other, and this living in one another will be the more intimate, deep, and enduring in the measure in which the flame of love that nurtures it is intimate, deep, and enduring. It is a mystery, if you will, of the human heart; or better still, it is a mystery of love, and withal it is an evident and indubitable mystery.

Now, my friends, the same thing takes place between God and the soul that loves Him. God loves the soul, adorns it with grace, keeps it near Himself, caresses it, takes it to His heart; the soul, on the other hand, keeps God constantly in its mind, keeps Him in its heart, unites itself wholly to Him, and thus God abides in it and it in God, and, as we should say, the two form one sole spirit, one sole life, as St. Paul frequently expresses it: *"I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."*

And, St. John adds, we have a persuasion, a proof, that God does abide in us and we in Him, *"because He hath given us of His Spirit."* When? Possibly he alludes to the visible coming of the Holy Spirit, or it may be he refers to the spirit of mutual charity that the Christians exhibited in all their relations with one another, a phenomenon never before seen on this earth and

an undeniable proof that the spirit of God had been poured out in their hearts.

In referring to the communication of the Holy Spirit, the fountain of charity, the most splendid proof of the love of God to man came very naturally to the mind of the apostle, and he repeats again what he said above: "*And we have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world.*" This is the prodigy of God's love, that His own Son came into the world and became man to save us; and Him, said the apostle, as if carried out of himself in an ecstasy of joy, we have seen, and we have heard, and we have touched, and Him do we announce to you.

Having called to their mind this most splendid proof of the love of God for us, namely the incarnation of His Son, St. John takes occasion to impress upon them the necessity of faith in this great mystery, saying: "*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God.*"

I may note here that in that age there had already arisen many heretics, such as the Cerinthians and Ebionites, who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ and contended that He was only a man, endowed with many spiritual gifts, but withal only a man; and to combat these St. John, either before or after writing his Epistle, wrote his Gospel. Bear well in mind, the apostle says, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the eternal Father, and the Saviour of the world, and that you must frankly and publicly confess this truth in word and deed, and this confession will prove that you

have that charity which I am insisting upon[1] and which unites God to you and you to Him.

It is characteristic of the writings of St. John that the same truth is repeated in various forms and frequently in the same words. He is like a father who loves his children dearly and never wearies of impressing upon them the thoughts that are nearest to his own heart; and hence in the following verse the holy apostle repeats a phrase that is dear to him: *"And we know and have believed the charity which God hath to us. God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God and God in him."*

We shall pass over this verse, which has already been explained, and go on to the two following verses, in which St. John touches upon one of the properties characteristic of perfect charity. *"In this is the charity of God perfected in us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is, we also are in this world."* This sentence is a little obscure, but it will be clearer if understood in this way: He perfected, or He exhausted His love for us, in order that we might be fully secure of a happy issue on the day of judgment; or again, God has done so much for us; He has lavished His benefits upon us without stint or measure, in order that we may be wholly without fear on the day of judgment. God, that is, Jesus Christ, was, and is in the world; He is constantly doing works of charity and diffusing His bounty among all; we, too, are also in the

[1]Qui confessus fuerit, non verbo, sed facto, non lingua, sed vita: nam multi confitentur verbis, sed factis negant.—ST. AUGUSTINE, in hunc locum.

world and have need of Him and of His unremitting benevolence and charity, and this charity will banish from us all fear of the Day of Judgment, for, as St. John goes on to say: "*Fear is not in charity, but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain, and he that feareth, is not perfected in charity.*" Love of God inspires confidence and excludes fear, and here we must point out the fear that can not coexist with love.

The fear that makes us diffident, that keeps us always unsettled and anxious lest our sins be not forgiven, the fear that dreads the chastisement more than the sin that merits it, the fear that hath pain, this fear can not coexist with perfect love; it is an evidence that we are slaves rather than children of God. But the fear that a son has of offending his father, the fear that arises from a consciousness of our own weakness, which leads us to put all our trust in God, this is a salutary and a holy fear, and not only can, but must be found together with perfect love; it is a part of it, it springs from it, it is a reasonable fear; and this is the sense in which St. Augustine says: "Let him who wishes to be without fear, learn to fear." The fear of offending God leads us to serve Him and love Him, and the more we love Him, the less we shall fear Him, and loving Him perfectly we shall wholly cease to fear Him. An absence of fear is the mark of perfection.

St. John in conclusion says: "*Let us therefore love God because God hath first loved us.*" This is a beautiful motive, but as it has already been touched upon, I shall pass it over here, only reminding you that not to requite love is cruelly to

wound him who loves, and in this world such a love very often changes into ferocious hatred and seeks a bloody revenge. God also punishes those who requite not His love by forsaking them, a most just, but a tremendous punishment.

St. John returns again to the thought expressed above, namely, the inseparable union between the love of God and the love of our neighbor, and, before making an end of his teaching and exhortation on charity, reinforces both in these words: "*If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?*" Love impels one to do the will of the person loved; and should one oppose that will or spurn it, it is clear he does not really love the person; now it is God's will that we should love our neighbor and our brother, and if we do not love him, we set God's will at defiance, and show by our action that we do not love God. Nay more; if one loves another, the image of the loved one and everything belonging to him are dear to him; but men are the living images of God and He so loved them that He gave Himself for their salvation; not to love our neighbor, then, is all one with not loving God; and if any one thinks he can love God and loves not his neighbor, he deceives himself. Would you, then, know with certainty that you love God and are His children? Examine whether or not you love your brother in word and deed; an infallible proof that you love God is this, that you love your neighbor.

And here a thought comes to me of a case which I could wish were rare. Sometimes we see per-

sons who are reputed religious, who go often to the sacraments, who say long prayers, who observe the laws of the Church, who do works of piety that are only of counsel and not of precept; persons, in short, who would be called exemplary, but who are unwilling to make the least sacrifice for their neighbor, who would not for his sake deprive themselves of a slight diversion or of the smallest sum of money. Is this the charity enjoined by Jesus Christ and proclaimed by the apostle John? Fewer prayers, fewer practices of devotion, and more charity toward your neighbor. Would you know certainly that you love God? See to it that you love your neighbor, not in words and tongue, but in works.

HOMILY IV

At that *time Jesus said to His disciples:* Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. And He spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? Do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master. And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not. Or how canst thou

say to thy brother: Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye: when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.—Gospel, *Luke* vi. 36-42.

One of the most beautiful and striking characteristics of the writings of Jesus Christ is this, that His sentences, whether dogmatic or moral, are simple, precise, clean cut, and so luminous that the mind has no difficulty in apprehending them, has no doubt as to their meaning, readily accepts them, and makes them its own, for it is all one to read them and to embrace the truths they convey. They resemble axioms, which, when stated, are admitted and assented to. That great military genius who died on the Island of St. Helena, said that Jesus Christ never once hesitated in His discourses; that He simply affirmed the truths He announced without troubling Himself to prove them, for, like light, their truth was apparent; that they were marshalled one after another like battalions on a battlefield, and bore down all before them. Philosophers, he said, in their writings, clothe the few truths they teach in elegant and sonorous phrases; they employ mental subtleties to prove them, and are at great pains to make them plausible, to give them life and color and grace of outline. There is nothing of all this in the discourses of Jesus Christ; He announces the most exalted truths, condenses them into the shortest sentences, and it would seem that He takes every precaution to strip them of all embel-

lishment, being desirous of setting them before us in their naked simplicity. In these respects no book in the world can be compared with the Gospel.[1]

The six verses, which I have just read for you, are an admirable example of this characteristic of the discourses of Christ. They contain a treasure of the most sublime, and yet the most simple, moral truths; they need no explanation; it is sufficient to consider them for a moment to feel and taste their incomparable beauty. Judge of this for yourselves.

"*Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful.*" These words, with which this Sunday's Gospel begins, are a continuation of other similar utterances of Jesus Christ concerning the beatitudes, His doctrine on the forgiveness of affronts, and on the duty of rendering good for evil.

What is meant by the word *mercy* or *merciful?* It means that we should feel in our hearts the wretchedness of others, that we should suffer with him who suffers, and by the practice of fraternal charity make the misfortunes of others our own. This sentiment ennobles our nature and forms elevated souls, generous hearts, and refined natures. Say that here is a child that falls to the ground and starts crying; or a sick man, who is tossing about and writhing on a bed of pain; or a beggar, who holds out his emaciated and trembling hand asking for an alms. What are our thoughts and feelings on beholding such sights? Do we not sorrow with the sorrowing, and does

[1] I have given the celebrated passage not literally, but in substance.

not a feeling of pity arise within us? This is mercy—this sentiment, which springs up in the mind, which sweeps through every fiber of the heart, which brings tears to the eyes, moves us to aid the suffering one and to free him from the evil which afflicts him, because in doing so we free ourselves from the same evil, for what he suffers we also suffer. This is what Jesus enjoins upon all His followers when He says: *"Be ye merciful."* If in our hearts we compassionate all sufferers, no matter whom, our hands will promptly respond to our hearts in doing works of charity.

And in this, as in everything else, who is our model? God Himself: *"Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful."* God, of course, being a pure spirit, is not merciful in the way in which we are merciful; in Him there is not and can not be, as in us, who are made up of matter and spirit, anything of the sensible; in God there is only love, pure love, without even a suggestion of sense. This love moves Him to love all creatures, to do good to them, to make the sun to rise and the vivifying rains to fall upon the fields of the just and the unjust.

Here the word "Father" designates, not the First Person of the august Trinity, but God in His essence, as is clear from the word *your,* and Jesus Christ calls Him Father, because the word is expressive of the pity and mercy, which He wishes to instil into us and impress upon us.

"Be ye merciful," says Jesus Christ, and you will be if you guard yourselves against harshly judging your brother; and hence He adds: *"Judge not, and you shall not be judged."* It is

hardly necessary to say that in this place Jesus forbids uncharitable judgments injurious to our neighbor, and lest the matter be misunderstood, it will be necessary to explain the subject at some length.

A judgment is in itself wholly an interior act, which may be made manifest by voice or writing, or in some other way. If I am certain that this man steals, that another is carrying on a sinful intimacy, and that a third blasphemes, am I culpably guilty in saying that the first is a thief, the second a libertine, and the third a blasphemer? Were this so I should be obliged, in order not to be culpably guilty, to abdicate my reason and to deny the truth. If, then, I form an evil judgment of my neighbor, but one founded on truth, I do not sin nor do I incur the condemnation of the Master. But if I form an evil judgment of the conduct of my neighbor and have no sufficient, or only slight, ground for doing so, although I do not make it known to others, I offend against justice, and fall under the sentence of Jesus Christ, who says: "*Judge not.*" My friends, how many evil judgments we form injurious to the character of our neighbor upon no sufficient ground, or upon appearances only! How often do we find fault with and condemn our brethren, whom we do not even know, without inquiring into the facts, relying merely upon public report, which is so frequently false and unjust, and, what is worse, make these imputations the subject of our conversations! How many offenses against justice and charity! How many scandals! What a prolific source of discords and hatreds! Let us

think of the words of Christ and tremble: "*Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned.*"

I believe one of the most common sins, and one, too, of which Christians and pious people are too often guilty, is that of rash judgment. For no cause at all we form judgments injurious to our neighbor, and, provided we do not reveal these judgments to others, we pay no attention to them; they cause us no remorse of conscience, and we do not confess them. But if men do not hear and know such judgments, God does, for He searches the mind and the heart, and God will judge us. In the depths of our hearts we have judged our neighbor, usurped the rights of God, and then we say: "What wrong have I done?"

If, however, we make known our internal judgment to others, and the judgment is based on truth, we should bear in mind the rule of St. Augustine, namely, that we should reveal it only when there is a necessity for doing so, prudently and in all charity, censuring the sin but not the sinner, and condemning the vice but not the vicious.[1] What is to be said, my dear friends, of certain authors and publishers of books and of certain journalists, who day by day assail their neighbors' character and good name, who heap insult and calumny upon them, who erroneously distort and exaggerate their small faults and pub-

[1]De ipsis, quæ sunt Deo nota, nobis incognita . . . . Dominus dixit: Nolite judicare, ut non judicemini. De illis vero quæ aperta sunt et publica mala judicare et arguere, cum charitate tamen et amore, et possumus et debemus, odio habentes non hominem, sed peccatum, non vitiosum, sed vitium detestantes, morbum potius quam ægrotum.—St. Augustine, Serm. ccii, De tempore.

lish them to the world? If what Jesus Christ says in the Gospel is true, that "*whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire,*" what shall be the fate of those journalists, those assassins of charity and very often of justice! What a judgment are they drawing down upon their heads! How severely will the God of justice deal with them!

Jesus Christ continues, saying: "*Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*" As I have already explained these words in another place I shall pass them over here, after making two remarks. First, I wish to say that this sublime sentence, "*Forgive, and you shall be forgiven,*" expresses the extremest perfection to which Christian charity can go; that there is no trace that such charity existed either among Pagans or Hebrews; and that it reveals a height of virtue wholly divine.

Next, in this oracle of Jesus Christ, which we daily repeat in the Lord's Prayer, heaven is joined to earth, love of God with love of man, and the forgiveness of our transgressions against God is represented to us as a reward of our forgiveness of our brother's transgressions against us. You understand, of course, that the forgiveness of our transgressions against God is a consequence of our forgiveness of our brother's transgressions against us, only in this sense, that it avails to gain for us the grace necessary to know our sins, to repent of them, and properly to confess them. Who would not think himself happy if he could only know with certainty that God had fully pardoned his sins? Would you have this certainty? Then, pardon from your very heart your enemies

and those who have offended you, and be tranquil and assured of God's pardon and of your everlasting salvation.

"*Give,*" the Gospel goes on, "*and it shall be given to you.*" These words should fill us with joy. We are all needy, all of us without exception. We are poor in this world's goods, and poorer still in the more essential goods of heaven; we are poor in faith, poor in charity, poor in humility, poor in every virtue; we are like reeds, bending before every wind of passion that blows; we are in need, continuous and extreme need, of the hand of God to sustain us, to strengthen us with His grace, and therefore do we cry out day by day: "Lord, give us poor wretches our daily bread, bread for the body and bread for the soul." He gives it to us at once, but on one condition, namely: "*Give, and it shall be given to you.*" Give to whom? To your suffering, famishing, naked, and sick brothers, who cry out for material and spiritual bread. Let us give to our brethren and God will give to us; He has promised and His words will not fail: "*Give and it shall be given to you.*" This is always and ever the great law, the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who wishes us to do to others as God does to us; it is the great law, whose purpose is to make earth like to heaven, to take man out of himself and his interests and lead him forward to the heights of virtue and perfection; it is the great law, whose aim is to establish among the sons of Adam that wonderful current of love, that blessed interchange of living, active love, that reigns in the august Trinity: "*Give, and it shall be given to you.*"

And how shall it be given to us? In what measure? Listen, and then tell me if God could be more generous: "*Good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over shall they give into your bosom.*" Let us weigh each word of this sentence. This measure is given by God. Why, then, does the text say that "*they shall give,*" and not that God shall give? Is it that others will give us this measure as a recompense for what we give to our brethren? There is no doubt that this abundant measure comes to us from God alone, but Christ's purpose in saying that "*they shall give it to you,*" was, if I mistake not, to indicate that God would give us this recompense by means of others, who would be, as it were, instruments in His hands to carry out His designs.

The recompense, Jesus Christ says, will be given us in *good* measure; note that He does not say *just* measure, but *good* measure, a measure which implies something more than what is just. But this is not all; the measure is *pressed down.* Ordinarily a measure is filled level with the top, but pressed down means abundant; it means that the measure can contain no more. It should seem that nothing could now be added, but no, Jesus uses another word, more expressive still, a measure *shaken together.* When the farmer fills his measure and presses down the grain, he gives it a shake and the grain works closer together and settles, and yet more may be put in; this is a measure shaken together. These three terms, *good, pressed down,* and *shaken together,* express wonderfully well the copiousness of the recompense;

but our Saviour finds still another and a stronger word, a measure *running over;* that is, a measure so shaken together and pressed down that the grain can not be confined within it; the grain rises up, expands and runs over the sides.

The Hebrews were accustomed to take their garments, which, after the fashion of the Orientals, were quite ample, and seizing the extremities of them make them into a sort of pouch into which they put grain, and this practice is still in use among some of our own women. Jesus alludes to this custom when He says: *"They shall give it into your bosom."* Now, my friends, I ask you: Could our divine Master have found words clearer and stronger in which to express His bounty and the munificence of the reward that will be given to those who are generous toward their needy brethren? Who will not feel himself impelled to give, and give generously, when by doing so he is certain of coming into immense possessions, which, as Jesus Christ elsewhere promises, will produce an hundred-fold?[1] Who will refuse to be bountiful to others, when he reflects that with precisely the same measure wherewith he measures unto them will God measure unto him, and that here on earth we sow what we shall reap in heaven?

Let us return to the Gospel. *"And He spoke to them a similitude."* It would seem that a certain interval of time intervened between what precedes and what follows, although there is no ab-

[1]Eleemosyna est ars omnia quæstuosissima.—St. Joan. Chrysost.

solute reason for doubting that the discourse was continuous.

The similitude is this: "*Can the blind lead the blind? Do they not both fall into the ditch?*" Here, I fancy, there is a reference to the Scribes and Pharisees, as appears from another passage of the Gospel. Full of themselves and puffed up with learning, they regarded themselves as the teachers of all and demanded that all should follow them; but they were such teachers as the apostle describes, who thinking themselves wise, were blind fools. Christ scourged them mercilessly because they would neither enter into the Kingdom of heaven themselves, nor allow others to enter, and He called them blind guides of the blind; "*Blind, and leaders of the blind.*" If a blind man guides a blind man, what will happen? Naturally, both will fall into the ditch. And this is what will happen to you, my brethren, as Christ says, if you follow the proud Pharisees. It is your duty to know the truth, and not knowing it you are in this sense like the blind; others must take you by the hand and guide you; but do not, as you value your salvation, trust yourselves to blind and proud guides, who will lead you into error and into the ditch.

My friends, we have all more or less need of guides, of safe teachers, in finding the way of truth, and many cry out to us: "Listen to us, we know the truth, we are teachers of the truth." The world is full of so-called teachers, who offer in discourses and books to be our guides; let us be careful to whom we trust ourselves. Do those guides and teachers come to us in the name of

Christ? Are they sent by the Church and by her Head? If so, let us welcome them, listen to them, and follow them. Do they come to us in their own name, or in the name of human science? Let us be wary of them; they are blind and leaders of the blind; they would be guides, and they will lead us into the ditch.

"*The disciple is not above his Master; but every one shall be perfect if he be as his Master.*" This sentence of Our Lord, like many others, is detached from its context, and is to be considered by itself. The Master, precisely because he is the Master, is above the disciple, and the latter should follow the former and not the former the latter; this is in the very nature of things. The greatest perfection to which a disciple can aspire, is to be like to his master and to be treated as his master is treated. Jesus Christ says in substance: "Now you know that I am your Master; you call Me Master, and you do well. How am I received by men? How am I treated? Of this you yourselves are witnesses; do not, then, hope to be better received by men than I have been; be satisfied to be treated as I have been treated." And this is a lesson intended wholly for us, who are the disciples of Jesus Christ and the continuators of His work on earth. It will be an honor for us and a most signal glory to meet with the same reception from men with which Jesus Christ met. Can we, disciples, believe that we are greater or more worthy than such a Master?

Jesus Christ now takes up again the subject treated in the first verses of this Gospel, where He

forbids us to judge our brothers and commands us to mete to others with the same measure with which each of us would wish that it be meted unto us, saying: "*And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thine own eye thou considerest not?*" You judge your brother harshly, you reprove him, you condemn the lapses that you discover in him. You are all eyes in discovering his flaws, but you pay no attention to your own; oblivious of your own miseries, you are wholly occupied with his. Our corporal eye sees everything round about it, but does not and can not see itself. Thus, our mental eye sees and points out the defects of others, and sometimes exaggerates them, and we forget to turn our eye in upon ourselves and scrutinize our own; we see the mote in our brother's eye and we do not see the beam in our own; we see the little shortcomings and omissions of others, and make much of them, and to our own more serious ones we are blind. What a contradiction! Here is a man, who is wholly sensual, steeped in all sorts of filth, and he affects to be terribly scandalized at the levity of some poor young girl. There is another, who is engaged in all sorts of dishonest dealing, who exacts monstrous usury from his victims, who is guilty of enormous injustice, and who, if a hungry man in passing a store takes a loaf of bread to appease his hunger, calls him a thief. Here is a third, who lies abed until nearly midday, who spends his days in eating and drinking and lazing, and who never leaves off railing at one of his workmen, who, worn out with toil, takes an hour's rest or dissipates for a

day. Is this justice? Is it honest? I leave you to judge. Rightly therefore does Jesus Christ reprove such censors, saying: "*How canst thou say to thy brother: Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.*" Before healing others, let us heal ourselves; before teaching others, let us teach ourselves; and put works before words, if we would not be blind leaders of the blind.

Second Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY V

DEARLY BELOVED: Wonder not, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death: Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.—EPISTLE, 1 *John* iii. 13-18.

YOU yourselves will have divined that these words are the words of St. John, the Apostle of love. All the writings of this beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, and especially his first Epistle, from which the words just read to you are taken, are so characteristic and so peculiarly his own that it would be impossible to mistake their authorship. Two fundamental thoughts, the love of God and the love of our neighbor, are interwoven in one continuous harmony and with marvelous variation into all he has written. No inspired writer of the New Testament has set forth, as clearly as he has, the nature and the character of

the law of grace, which is the law of love, as our divine Saviour says in the following words: *"On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets."*

It is not surprising, then, to find very frequently repetitions in the writings of St. John, and notably in his first Epistle. St. Jerome informs us that St. John, when he was past ninety years of age, was carried in the arms of his disciples into a gathering of the faithful to speak some words of edification to them; and that when the Apostle of love went on repeating these words: *"My children, love one another,"* his auditors, annoyed at hearing him say the same thing over and over again, asked him why he did so; to whom the saint gave this answer, an answer worthy of him: *"Because it is the command of the Lord, and if it is observed, it is all-sufficient."* The Epistle, which he has left us, may be said to be a faithful repetition of this exhortation, which the Beloved Apostle gave to the assembled faithful and of which St. Jerome has left us an account.

If, in the course of this homily, you hear this law of brotherly love insisted on over and over again, be neither surprised nor annoyed; it is the command of the Lord, and if it is fulfilled, you will have done your full duty. And now let us listen to our teacher, the Apostle of love, and meditate on his words.

In order that you may the better understand the explanation of the verses just read, it will be necessary to go back and show their connection with those that go before. St. John says that those who do evil, precisely because they do evil,

show themselves to be followers of the devil; and that the sons of God are known by the fact that they do no evil. He says that the great message brought on earth by Jesus Christ is this: "*That you should love one another;*" that the world, that is, the wicked and the followers of the devil, hate the good, the children of God, by an instinct of their nature; that their prototype was Cain, who hated his brother Abel and killed him, and that these wicked men are still in our midst. Hence, he goes on: "*Wonder not if the world hates you.*" This is a literal repetition of the words of Jesus Christ as given in St. John's own Gospel: "*You are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hates you.*"[1] The apostle bids us not to be surprised if the world hates the disciples of Jesus Christ; to me it seems a matter of great surprise, a matter almost beyond belief. Those Christians, like their divine Master, harmed no one; they loved every one as a brother; they did good to all, in as far as they were able, even to their most implacable enemies; they were humble and lowly, patient and chaste, and adorned with every virtue, so much so that they were a marvel to the Pagans themselves. Surely, then, no one should hate them; rather they should have been loved, or at least tolerated. And yet they were furiously hated, and St. John says that this should not surprise any one: "*Wonder not if the world hates you.*" And why not wonder? How is this contradiction explained? As a rule, the wicked hate the good, and this is as it should be. Darkness is the opposite of light, and

[1] xv. 19.

the wicked are the enemies of the good. The virtues of the good are a continuous and stinging rebuke to the wicked; the conduct of the good is the condemnation of the wicked; it kindles remorse in their hearts, it humiliates them, it offends and wounds them, and hence the wicked hate the very sight of virtuous men, they listen to them with impatience, and, if they could, they would banish them out of the world. The hatred of the wicked against the good does not arise from reason or reflection; it is an instinct; it is born of the very nature of things; it is as the hatred of the wolf against the lamb, or of the dog that attacks the hare; neither has been harmed or provoked, neither is impelled by hunger; the wolf rends the lamb and the dog pursues and mangles the hare, because such is the nature of each, and so also do the wicked burn with hatred against the virtuous. The world hated and persecuted the apostles and all the saints; it hated and persecuted the Saint of saints, Jesus Christ, and shall we, then, be amazed if it hates and persecutes those who follow in His footsteps?

The world hates us as Cain hated Abel, as the Jews hated Jesus Christ; and what is our comfort and consolation? This: "*We know that we have passed from death to life.*" What matters it if we are hated and persecuted by this perverse world? We were wandering in the darkness of error; we were children of this reprobate world and dead to God; but now by His grace we have come out from that darkness, we have escaped death, and through faith and baptism we have entered into the kingdom of life. And how do we

know this? What proof have we of it? We have this most certain proof: "*Because we love the brethren.*" It is an infallible sign that we are living a life of grace, which will in season be succeeded by a life of glory, if we feel within us a love for our brothers. I have no doubt that St. John meant by the word *brethren* in this passage, not the brothers in the Faith, but all men indiscriminately, even enemies and unbelievers, for they, too, are our brothers. Here, then, St. John gives to his Christian readers an infallible mark by which they may know that they are in the kingdom of the divine life, namely, if they have charity one toward another. If this charity were limited to the few Christians then living, to the exclusion of all others, how could it be a token that they had passed into the kingdom of life, the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Even the Hebrews and the Pagans in a measure loved one another; they loved their relatives and their friends, their acquaintances and their fellow-countrymen.

But if we take the word *brethren* in its largest sense, as meaning all men, we shall get a true idea of the supernatural and divine character of charity. We have a certain proof, St. John says in effect, that we are sons of God in this, that we love all men and regard them all as brothers, even those who hate us, who calumniate and persecute us. A love like this, universal, generous, and constant, is impossible to man if he relies only on his natural powers; it comes, and it can come, only from on high, from God Himself; it is a gift that is wholly His, and hence its possession gives us a certainty that we are truly followers of Jesus

Christ and that our hearts are filled with His grace: "*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.*"

Having spoken of charity toward the brethren, that characteristic mark of the disciples of Christ, and of the marvelous transformation wrought by divine grace, St. John after his manner, or rather acting on the impulse of his heart, goes on to speak of the worth of this virtue, saying: "*He that loveth not, abideth in death.*" He that loves not, that is, he who does not bear love toward his brother, an active, operative love, a love of which grace is the source and motive, is in a state of sin, and therefore, though living in the body, is dead in the spirit. Of its nature the soul is immortal, as we know from faith and reason; but, when deprived of divine grace, it is separated from God, and therefore cut off from the source of all life. How does the body live? What is its source of life? It lives inasmuch as, and because, it is united with the soul, which penetrates and permeates it through and through and quickens it with life. Separate the soul from the body and what happens? The body dies and passes into dissolution. So also if the soul is cut off from grace, or from God, its source of life, it is as if dead. Its death is not now apparent to mortal eyes, just as during the winter season it is not apparent which trees are living and which are dead; but when the spring comes, the dead trees continue dead and the living burst forth into life and beauty. So also it is with the soul, and, because of the soul, with the body also; at the second coming of Jesus Christ, at the rising of the Sun of eternal

justice, we shall see what is meant by the death of the soul and by the death of its bodily vesture, its everlasting consort.[1]

A soul without grace or charity is living in death. This idea of death calls up in the mind of the inspired writer another and an analogous idea, which throws light on the first and confirms it: "*Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.*" It seems clear to me that the meaning of St. John is that not to love one's brother is the same as to hate him, although in itself not to love is not always the same as to hate, since between loving and hating, we can conceive a middle or indifferent state, which is neither the one nor the other. But in this case the apostle says clearly: "*He that loveth not, abideth in death; whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.*" Whom does he murder? Himself or his brother? He may be understood to murder himself, since not having charity in his heart toward his brother, or rather hating him, he sins gravely, and therefore murders his own soul; and expressing the same thought St. Ambrose very well says that "he who hates, murders himself first and before any one else." Still this does not seem the most obvious and natural sense of the apostle's words; they seem to imply that he who is murdered is not the hater but the one hated. But how can one who hates another be said to murder him? Is not this clearly an exaggeration? Between murdering a person and hating him there seems to be the

[1]Mors animæ fit, cum eam deserit Deus, sicut corporis, cum id deserit anima. Ergo utriusque rei, idest totius hominis mors est, cum a Deo deserta deserit corpus.—ST. AUGUSTINE, lib. i, De Civit. Dei, c. i.

greatest difference. It is true that hatred is not homicide, and it would be a sad thing for the world if it were; but, my friends, a passage of St. Matthew not unlike that of St. John may help us out: "*Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart;*"[1] which means that the deliberate consent to the thought of committing sin is, before God, equivalent to committing it, because God sees and judges the heart. So also in this passage it is as if St. John said: "Beware, my children, against giving place in your hearts to hatred of your brother, because that hatred will carry you on to desire evil against him, and even to desire to take his life, and will possibly impel you actually to take it." And in matter of fact, whence come quarrels and cuttings and homicides? From hatred. Homicide is a birth of hatred, and since hatred is the cause of homicide, he is rightly called a murderer who welcomes hatred into his heart, as St. Jerome says.[2]

Thanks be to God, there are few that really hate their brother, but there are many, and these quite frequently persons who think themselves religious and devout, who, if they do not hate him, certainly do not love him, who shut him out from their heart, who regard him with ill-disguised displeasure and cherish rancor against him, and who can not bring themselves to pardon an offense, which is more frequently than not purely imaginary. What is to be said of such persons? God

[1]Matt. v. 28.

[2]Cum homicidium ex odio sæpe nascatur, quicumpue odit, etiamsi necdum gladio percusserit, animo tamen homicida est. (Epist. xxxvi., Ad Castor.)

alone reads the heart and weighs in His own scales the transgressions of men; but what is certain is, that of such lapses against charity men make little or no account, and even persons of real piety do not heed them. And yet they are always culpable and frequently they pave the way to open hatred.

My friends, let us be on our guard and not allow this evil seed, which so easily passes into hatred, to take root in our hearts.

The apostle now asks what is the punishment reserved for homicide? His answer is, death. Hence he who bears hatred toward his brother can not possess eternal life.

And here St. John returns again to the idea of charity and to its supreme model, Jesus Christ, saying: *"In this we know the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us."* Men too often hate one another and deprive one another of life; Jesus Christ, on the contrary, loves, and loves all men, and so deeply does He love them that He gives His life for them. Such and so intense is His love! What a model for imitation!

And here it is well to note that in this passage St. John calls Jesus Christ God, since he says that in this we have known the love of God because He gave His life for us. Now who gave his life and immolated himself for us? Jesus Christ. Therefore St. John here calls Jesus Christ God.

And what should we learn from Jesus Christ, the supreme pattern of charity? *"He hath laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."*

Do these words of Our Lord mean that we may

sacrifice the life of the soul, everlasting life, for the spiritual salvation of our brothers? The very thought of such a thing would be, not only folly, but a blasphemy; the salvation of our souls is our sovereign good; everything else must be sacrificed for it, but it may not be sacrificed for any other good, no matter how great. The life, then, of which St. John speaks, and which we ought to sacrifice for our brethren, is the life of the body.

But how is this to be understood? Are we obliged to give our lives for our brethren? Is it a duty, as the Sacred Text implies by using the word *ought?* Is it always a duty? If this be true we must love our neighbor more than ourselves, while the Gospel and nature itself only require that we love our neighbor as ourselves, that is, that in loving our neighbor our love toward ourselves should be our pattern and measure.

The answer is obvious and manifest. Well-ordered charity requires that we love ourselves better than our neighbor, since one is nearer to himself than to his neighbor, and therefore as a rule no one is obliged to give his life to save that of his neighbor. But if he should do so, what then? If to save one who is drowning or in danger of being burned to death, another leaps into the river or rushes into the midst of the flames, shall we say that well-ordered charity is transgressed and that the action is blameworthy? Heaven forbid; no one is obliged to take such a risk, and if he does not take it, he commits no sin, since he violates no law; but if he does do it, we salute him as a hero and reverently uncover in the presence of such greatness of soul, of a glorious martyr of charity

and an imitator of the divine Master who gave His life for us.

But if it should happen that, to save the spiritual life of my brother, it would be necessary for me to offer my temporal life, would I be obliged to make the sacrifice? Without doubt I should, because the office I hold obliges me to make the sacrifice. Hence we see priests, pastors of souls, and bishops everywhere and always hurrying off without a moment's hesitancy to challenge death at the bedside of those stricken with infectious disease in hospitals and pesthouses, in order to administer to them the consolations of religion. If a soldier, who is faithful to his duty, fears not death on the field of battle, fighting to defend his country and its interests, how can we hesitate to face death when there is question of the interest of Heaven and the conquest of a heavenly country? There is no more sublime spectacle on earth than that of one who offers his own life to save that of another; what, then, are we to say of him who offers himself to save, not the temporal, but the eternal life of his brother?

After speaking of charity toward our brothers in general and of that supreme manifestation of it which consists, if necessary, in laying down our life for them, the apostle takes up the practical application of charity in its most ordinary form, saying: "*He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how does the charity of God abide in him?*"

True charity manifests itself in works. Would you know if this charity abides in your heart?

Look to your works. The good tree is known, not by its leaves, but by its fruits. Here is a brother who is famishing, who is ill-clad and shivering with the cold, who has not a roof to cover him, or a bed to lie on, who is stricken with disease and has no one to minister to him, who is suffering and has no one to comfort him. Here is an opportunity to test your charity. It is for you to feed him, to clothe him, to house him, to aid him with alms, or, better still, to find work for him if possible, the alms that does not humiliate; it is for you, if you can not yourself come to his assistance, to make yourself his advocate with those who can; it is for you to speak a cheering word to him, a word of advice and comfort, to speak to him from the heart, that he may be encouraged to open his heart to you.

The world in dismay hears the threatening shouts of mobs of turbulent men marching through the streets and demanding food and work; it sees an immense army of the destitute and suffering who are waiting and yearning for the hour of the upheaval of society; the roar of the storm, and who can deny it, approaches nearer and nearer; the tide is rising, getting higher and higher, and it will end by passing like a torrent of lava over the whole continent, leaving only destruction in its wake. Is there a remedy to save us from such a disaster? Yes, there is, but it is not to be found in discourses, or in treatises, or in the books of the learned; neither is it to be found in laws, nor in armed force in the defense of law. It is to be found in the great law of charity; let the great, the learned, and the rich hum-

ble themselves; let them love their brothers with a true love; let them instruct them, aid them out of their abundance, but above all let them come down among them, mingle with them, and, inspired by that charity which makes all equal, form with them but one sole family, and the storm will pass harmless away. The full solution of the portentous problem, which we see on every side of us, is contained in these two sentences of St. John: *"He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need, and shall close his heart against him, how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."* This is the infallible remedy for the evils that threaten us; this is the true and practical solution of the social problem that torments us; that equality, which is not the birth of force or injustice, but the fair daughter of charity cheerfully bestowed.

I shall close this homily by quoting the words of two Fathers of the Church; the first speaks to bishops, and in a measure to priests also; the second speaks to you, my brethren of the laity. The first is St. Bernard, who says: "Wo to you, O bishop; it is not lawful for you to spend in luxury the goods of the Church or to waste them in superfluities; neither is it lawful for you to enrich yourself, nor to exalt your relatives, nor to build palaces; all that you take from the Altar over and above what is necessary for you to live and to clothe yourself decently, is not yours; it is robbery, it is sacrilege."[1]

[1]"Væ tibi, Episcopo . . . Non licet tibi de facultatibus Ecclesiæ

The second is St. Basil and he speaks to laymen: "And are you not a robber, since, having received what you should distribute, you regard it as your own? The bread that you have is the bread of the hungry; the garment that you lay up in the wardrobe is the garment of the naked; those shoes of yours that are rotting away are the shoes of the barefooted; and the money that you inhumanly clutch is the money of the indigent. You therefore defraud as many poor as it is in your power to relieve."[1]

HOMILY VI

AT THAT *time Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable:* A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I can not

luxuriari et in superfluitatibus consumere, sed solum vivere: non licet ditari, non licet consanguineos extollere; non licet palatia ædificare: denique quidquid præter necessarium victum ac simplicem vestitum de altari retines, tuum non est, rapina est, sacrilegium est."—ST. BERNARDUS, Epist. xxiv.

[1]At tu nonne spoliator es, qui, quæ dispensanda accepisti, propria reputas? Est panis famelici, quem tu tenes: nudi tunica, quam tu in conclavi conservas: discalceati calceus, qui apud te marcescit: indigentis argentum quod possides inhumane. Quocirca tot pauperibus injuriam facis, quot dare valeres."—BASILIUS in illud: Destruam horrea mea.

come. And the servant returning told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city: and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges; and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xiv. 16-24.

EVIDENTLY the Church directs that the parable, which you have just heard, shall be read on this Sunday, that within the octave of Corpus Christi, because she sees in it an indirect reference to the eucharistic Banquet.

This parable of St. Luke is very like that narrated in the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew, and some interpreters maintain that the two are one and the same with some slight differences. But if we carefully compare the two together we shall easily discover that they are distinct one from the other, that Jesus Christ spoke each at a different time and place and with a different purpose, and that the discrepancies are such that the two can not be regarded as one and the same.[1]

In the verses immediately preceding the parable Jesus bids His hearers, when invited to a ban-

[1]St. Irenæus, and after him Maldonatus, held that the parable as related by the two Evangelists is, barring some differences, identical. It may be that the parable was proposed twice by Our Lord with some variation and for a diverse purpose.

quet, always to sit down in the lowest places and to invite to their own tables the poor, who can not return the favor, since by so doing they will receive a reward from God in the life to come. The purpose of this teaching of Our Lord will be apparent when we call to mind that, while He spoke these words, He was seated at the table of one of the chief Pharisees, who had invited Him to dine. Hearing this teaching, one of those seated at table with Him, whose name the Gospel does not give, spoke up and said: *"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God."* Jesus, taking occasion from these words, spoke the parable which we are about to explain, in which He represents the Kingdom of God under a figure quite familiar with Him, namely of a great banquet.

"A certain man," He says, *"made a great supper and invited many; and he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready."*

Who is this man, this prince, who prepares a great supper? Undoubtedly he is intended to represent God, the Man-God, Jesus Christ. And of what is the supper a figure? It is a figure in anticipation of the Church Militant; it may also prefigure the Blessed Eucharist; but it seems more natural to take it as a figure of eternal life and of the heavenly glory to which all men are called. In this sense, as is clear, the supper includes indirectly both the Church Militant and the Blessed Eucharist, since no one can share this banquet unless he has first entered into the Church and par-

taken of the Blessed Eucharist.[1] It is called a *supper* because it is given at the close of this life, which, as compared with eternity, is as a day, and because it is as a reward to him who has borne the burden of the day and the heats. It is called a *great supper* either because all are invited to it, or because it will last forever, or because of the incomparable blessings that it typifies, blessings which shall fill the heart and satisfy its longings.

The servant, who in the name of his master goes out to bid those that are invited to come to the supper, represents the prophets and the apostles, all those who continue their work, all the ministers of the Church, through whose voice God speaks in every time and place, and who invite all to the *Supper of the Lamb,* to the gaining of eternal life.[2] I have said that God invites all to the Supper; and here it may be objected that the Sacred Text does not say *all,* but *many: "He invited many."* The word "many" sometimes, as you know, signifies *all* or a *multitude,* and certainly *all* means *many,* and *all* are, as is clear, invited to the *Supper.* And is it not a truth of faith that God wishes all men to be saved? That Jesus Christ died for all? That God wills not that any one should perish? And does not reason itself teach us that God, who is infinite goodness, must

[1]For adults, of course, because baptized infants go to heaven even without partaking of the Blessed Eucharist.

[2]The rule of St. John Chrysostom is very well known. He tells us that we can not attempt to apply point by point the words and the subjects of a parable without at times having the sense conflict. It is enough if the parable is applicable as a whole. Thus it is said here that the Master sent only one servant, but this one servant represents all men sent by God and Jesus Christ to preach the truth.

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wish the happiness and salvation of all men without exception? Now if God on His part does not call all to His Supper, He would not wish that all should be saved, since those whom He does not invite can not come to Him, and if they do not, they shall necessarily be lost. But God does invite and call all to the Supper of eternal life; He calls them in different ways, but none is forgotten or excluded. He calls them by the words of the patriarchs and prophets, by the voice of His apostles and His ministers; He calls them by good example, by remorse and by interior inspirations; He calls them directly and indirectly, by books and pictures, by the voice of conscience, and in a thousand ways known only to Himself, but He invites and calls all; and did He not do so, he who was not called could say to Him: "Lord, if I did not come to Thy Supper, it was because I was not invited; Thou didst not call me and hence I did not come; if any one is at fault, it is Thou and not I, since Thy voice did not reach me." Hence Jesus Christ in the parable does not say that any were not invited, and this truth will become more clearly apparent as we go on with the explanation of the parable.

Whatever may be said of others, is there a single one of you who has not been called to the Supper of eternal life, and that repeatedly and with the most fervid insistence? Has not God anticipated you with His grace, giving you the privilege of being born in the bosom of His Church? Has He not encompassed you with favors in infancy and youth, in manhood and old age? How often has the servant of the Great Master come to you

to invite you, to call you to the feast? What has been your reply? I leave it to your conscience to answer.

Jesus continues the parable: *"And they began all at once to make excuse."* You know that to refuse a gracious and honorable invitation without an adequate reason is an affront to him who sends it, and all the more so if he is a person of dignity and consideration. It is virtually saying to him that you do not regard it as an honor to be one of his guests and that you prefer rather your own ease. What excuse did those give who were invited? *"The first said: I have bought a farm and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused: Another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused. Another said: I have married a wife and I can not come."*

Those who were invited are of three distinct classes, and in these three divisions interpreters see indicated the three master concupiscences that, as St. Jerome says, dominate the world; namely, the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life; or, in other words, an ill-regulated love of material things, of sensual pleasure, and of one's own excellence. And as a matter of fact, all the reasons, or rather pretexts, that men give for not heeding the calls and the promptings of grace and for refusing to sit down to the banquet of eternal life, may be reduced to this threefold concupiscence, which makes us slaves to the goods of earth, to the pleasures of sense, and to the pride of intellect.

"What," says St. Jerome, "is signified by a

farm if not the goods of earth? He went to see the farm because his thoughts and affections were wholly set upon material things."[11] My friends, what a sight meets our eyes continuously and everywhere! How are all men, or nearly all, engaged? By a thousand different paths they go in quest of the things of this earth. One engages in commerce or trade; another in industry or manufacture; a third buys lands and cultivates them; and each is intent on making and acquiring money as an instrument and means of pleasure. And has God created us for this? And even if we could procure all these things and enjoy them, would they bring us happiness, true happiness, the happiness for which we yearn? Assuredly not. Even if we possessed the whole world our heart would long for more; it would not be happy as it yearns to be happy; it would still and always be restless and desolate. Why, then, will we always run after the fleeting goods of this world, turning our back upon those whom God sends to invite us to His supper, to the participation of the joys that no one can take from us and that will ever and always completely fill and satisfy the desires of the heart? The goods of earth, which we now so ardently desire, will be irrevocably taken from us at the hour of death, if not before, and the more our hearts are set upon them, the more acute and painful will be the anguish of parting with them. It is, therefore, wise

[11]"Quid per villam, nisi terrena substantia designatur? Exiit ergo videre villam, quia sola exteriora cogitat propter substantiam." (Homil. xxxvi, in Evangel.)

"Ambitio sæculi, villam emi. . . . In villa empta dominatio notatur."—ST. AUGUSTINE, De Verbis Dom., Ser. xxxiii.

voluntarily to detach our hearts from these things before we are forced to do so by death; and it is also wise to fix our heart where it will live forever and where it will find true and perfect bliss. Let none of us, then, give a rude and thoughtless answer to God when He bids us come to His everlasting banquet; let none of us say: *"I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out to see it."* *"Another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them."* In these words are also depicted those who are immersed in the affairs of this world; they are quite as much given to the things of earth as those of whom we have just spoken and possibly more so; for oxen, being employed to cultivate the land, are naturally associated with the idea of fields and tillers of the soil. Between the farmer and the latter there is, if I mistake not, the same difference that exists between the proprietors and owners of the soil and those who simply cultivate it. The first say: "We have our farms and our lands to look after and we must superintend the works in progress there." They are wealthy, the lords of the land; they walk proudly through their fields and say with haughty complacency: "All this is mine." The second are the tillers of the soil, the laborers, who obey the beck of the proprietors. To labor is the lot of all and no one can escape labor without transgressing the precept given to the first man: *"With labor and toil, in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."* But this labor of the hand should not prevent us from applying ourselves to that more noble and necessary labor of cultivating the mind and the heart, thus nourish-

ing the soul. Here, for example, are a farmer and a craftsman, who are constantly engaged in the field or in the shop, always intent upon their work, never giving a thought to God, to prayer, or to the saving of their souls, to whom Sunday is not different from Monday; who, if they are reminded that besides a body they have also a soul, that besides an earthly master they have also a heavenly Master, that they should sanctify the Sunday, hear the word of God, pray, and approach the sacraments, reply: "There is work awaiting us in the field and in the shop." Such as these are fair representatives of the man in the Gospel, who on being invited to the supper replied: *"I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to try them."* My friends, let us not do as they did. When we are summoned to church, or to prayer, or to the eucharistic Banquet, a pledge of the heavenly Banquet, let us say at once: "Behold we come." Give to the body what belongs to it, and this is a great deal; but give also to the soul what belongs to it, and this is a trifle as compared with what is given to the body.

And the third said: *"I have married a wife and can not come."* This man, who refuses to come to the supper because he has married a wife, St. Gregory says, represents the voluptuous man. "For," he says, "what is meant by the word wife if not the voluptuousness of the flesh?"[1] The words of a great modern saint are of portentous import, he says: "All who are lost are lost either through the sin of luxury or because of it." Alas, it is only too true. For, O my God,

[1]Hom. xxvi.

how many men or women have preserved themselves unspotted in the midst of this universal contagion? How many souls are there who, like the dove of Noah, have alighted on this earth without defiling their feet and soiling their white plumage with the filth that covers it? Thou alone knowest, O Lord, but certainly they are very few, and on that account all the more precious in Thy sight.

My friends, enter for a moment into the secret foldings of your heart, interrogate your conscience, and in the light of faith see if unfortunately a disorderly love of pleasure and sensual passion, which St. John calls the concupiscence of the flesh, holds you like slaves fettered to the earth, and prevents you from approaching to the heavenly Banquet. If so, let us lose no time; let us break this chain, let us sever these cords, let us give up that guilty intimacy, that voluptuous, degrading sin, unbecoming, not alone to a Christian, but even to a Pagan. This concupiscence of the flesh is of its very nature so sinful that he who is enslaved by it does not even deign, as the slaves of the other passions did, to give a polite excuse for not accepting the invitation of the Lord. They said to the servant who invited them: *"I pray thee, hold me excused;"* their refusal was courteous; while he replied bruskly and rudely: *"I have married a wife and I can not come."* It is characteristic of this base passion that it stifles the noblest impulses of the heart, extinguishes the purest affections of our nature, and makes the soul vulgar, mean, ungrateful, and morose. I will say, then, with St. Augustine: "Away with vain

and wicked excuses; let us up and go to the banquet, where our souls will be refreshed and nourished. Let not pride hold us back, or guilty curiosity carry us away or deter us or turn us from God; let not the pleasures of sense prevent us from enjoying the delights of the heart; let us go and be refreshed and strengthened.'"[1]

We should not forget, my dear friends, that this parable was spoken at a feast to which one of the chief Pharisees had invited Our Lord and that it was specially directed to those who listened to Him and to the Jews generally, who obstinately refused to receive His teaching. In the three calls, then, His purpose was to represent the conduct of the Jews, and we learn from Christ that their refusal to listen to Him was due to their pride, to their love of riches, and to their propensity to the pleasures of sense.

Those who were invited refused to come to the supper; was the supper chamber, then, left empty? Was the master of the house, who had prepared so sumptuous a banquet, to be put to shame by not having guests to do him honor? God forbid. "*The master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame.*"

As is clear from the whole narrative, those who were first invited belonged to the rich and better classes; they were Scribes and Pharisees, and

[1] "Tollamus ergo de medio excusationes vanas et malas, et veniamus ad cœnam, qua intrinsecus saginemur. Non nos impediat extollentia superbiæ, non nos extollat, non nos terreat curiositas illicita et avertat a Deo, non nos impediat voluptas carnis a voluptate cordis, veniamus et saginemur."—In JOAN., c. ii, apud à Lapide.

Jews generally, who, taught by the prophets and familiar with the Law could, unlike the poor Gentiles encompassed with all sorts of error, have easily known the truth. But since the rich and learned of Israel would not come to the Supper prepared by Christ, in their place were called the poor, the ignorant, and the despised, the beggars, the halt, and the blind, thus verifying the words of Christ: *"That the Publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of Heaven before you, and that the first shall be last and the last first."* And verily this is what happened and is still happening; for while sinners and publicans and harlots, while the poor, the maimed, and the mendicants, left all and followed Christ, the Pharisees, the great and the rich, cared nothing for Him; they despised Him, spurned Him, and persecuted Him; while the great bulk of the people of Israel, infatuated by dreams of worldly power and greatness, turned their backs on Christ, the Gentiles, docile and full of faith, hastened to sit down at His banquet. The proud and ambitious children of the kingdom went out from the house of the Master, while, in their place, the Gentiles came with simple faith and entered in.

And what happened then has happened in every age since and is happening now. Even St. Paul says that in his time there were *"not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble"* who followed the Gospel.[1] Origen said the same two centuries later and we can witness it in our own day. Who are they who fill our churches, listen to the word of God, frequent the

[1] 1 Cor. i. 26.

sacraments, and live holy lives? Speaking generally, our churches are filled by you, children of the plain people, men of toil, who earn your bread in the sweat of your brow; and it is comparatively rare to see here the wealthy, or men of science, so called; rarely are they seen mingled with you and making with you a public profession of faith. Still they, too, are called to the Gospel supper, called it may be before you and with still greater urgency, but the arrogance of worldly distinction, of pride, and the immoderate desires that usually go hand and hand with great wealth, make them answer: "We can not come." Be not scandalized at these brethren of ours, and be not discouraged to find that at this banquet you are nearly all poor and the sons of toil; Jesus Christ foretold it and His words can not fail to be verified.

The Gospel goes on: "*And the servant said: Lord it is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.*" Assuredly the number of the elect is known and there will not sit down at that everlasting Banquet one more or one less than He in His wisdom has ordained. Hence the words of the servant, who reported that there was still place, should not lead us to suspect that God does not know the number of the elect; they are added only to embellish the parable and to show that God calls men to eternal salvation in various ways, giving now fewer and now more abundant graces.

"*The Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*" This is the

third call, and because of its wider extension and greater urgency it sets forth in still stronger light the goodness of the master of the house. He directs the servant to go, not only into the public squares and streets of the city, but also into the hedges beyond the dwellings of men, and not only to invite, but to *compel* all the poor he finds and all the halt and the blind to come into his house and partake of his feast. These words prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that God wills the salvation of all, because He calls all; He calls them repeatedly, He calls them no matter where or in what region they are, without regard to their rank or condition, whether they are rich or poor, in health or in sickness. Note that extremely strong word: "*Compel them to come in.*" But does God compel any one to enter His church and His heavenly kingdom? Does He do violence to our liberty? No, never; liberty is a gift of God and God never takes back what He gives; it is written that God treats us with reverence. Should God compel us, or in any way restrain our liberty, there would be an end to all our merit, and our homage and obedience would be without value. It is a truth of faith that we can resist the grace of God and refuse to listen to His voice, and that when we yield to His grace and obey His call we do so freely and voluntarily. The strong phrase, then, *compel them to come in,* signifies an energetic call, a strong impulse, an extraordinary grace, but by no means a forcible compulsion, which is impossible and would be injurious both to God and to us. Our liberty, which consists in the power of choosing or selecting, and which

makes us arbiters and masters of our own acts, is the greatest gift that God has given us, a gift that makes us like unto Himself. We are very jealous of this gift, and wo to him who trespasses upon it, or attempts to do so. Who does not extol and glorify liberty? And this is precisely why men contradict themselves. There are many learned men who deny the existence of the soul, who affirm that it is a property, a function, or a quality of matter, like the heat of the body, and who therefore necessarily deny that a man is free, thus making of him a being who can not act otherwise than he does act, who is like a plant, which under the influence of the genial warmth of the sun flourishes and puts forth flowers and fruit, or like a brute which is governed by instinct. Such pride and yet such abasement! They extol liberty to the skies and then deny its existence. Let us not listen to the teaching of these men, who outrage both faith and reason, but let us be firmly convinced that we possess that sovereign gift of liberty and that we shall have to give a most rigorous account of the use we make of it. It may indeed surprise some that the master of the house used those strong words: "*Compel them to come in,*" but there is a loving compulsion that does no violence to liberty, and such is the compulsion of which the Gospel speaks.

Here, for example, is a friend who is very dear to you, whom you highly esteem, and who invites you to his home; you do not wish to go, but he insists, repeats the invitation, urges you, takes you by the hand, and affectionately carries you with him, until finally yielding to his entreaties and his

kindness you do his will. Assuredly you are not forced in the strict sense of the word and you could, if you would, persist in refusing the invitation; but it is also true that he did you affectionate violence and in a sense constrained you to yield to his own entreaties. The words, "*compel them to come in,*" convey to our mind a vivid idea of how ardently God wishes that all should sit down at His Banquet.

The parable is brought to a close in these terrifying words: "*But I say unto you, that none of these men that were invited shall taste of My Supper.*" They were invited, and they brutally refused to come; it is therefore but just that they should not taste of the Supper which they refused. It is clear that reference is here made to eternal life, into which none of those who voluntarily shut themselves out, by spurning the loving and repeated invitations of the Master, shall ever be able to enter.

God grant that none of us may be of the number of those unhappy men, who by refusing the generous invitation of the Master drew upon themselves this frightful sentence: "*I say unto you that none of these men that were invited shall taste of My Supper.*"

Third Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY VII

DEARLY BELOVED: Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation: Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalleth your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will Himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To Him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.—EPISTLE, 1 *Peter* v. 6-11.

THESE words of the first Letter of St. Peter have been selected by the Church to be read in the Mass of this Sunday. They are few, but as you will have observed, they contain moral truths of the greatest importance, which I shall endeavor to explain and which you, I hope, will try to make your own.

St. Peter on closing his Epistle, which consists of five short chapters, addresses pastors of souls, exhorting them to be zealous, disinterested, and modest, and to encourage them he reminds them of the unfading crown which they shall receive from Jesus Christ, the Prince of pastors. Then addressing young men, he exhorts them to be doc-

ile, respectful to the aged, and humble toward one another, because humility is pleasing to God, who gives grace to the humble. Then speaking to all, he says: "*Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God.*" Humility, as you know, is the result of self-knowledge,[1] and, I will add, of the knowledge of God, since the latter is the completion and perfection of the former, just as the shadows of a picture require light to throw them into strong relief.

Let us for a moment confine our thoughts to ourselves and consider our own being. What is this body of ours? A bit of clay that will soon return to mother earth; a bit of cloud, glorified for a moment by the rays of the sun, which the next moment a puff of air will disperse; a flower, radiant with glowing color and rich with fragrance in the morning, and drooping, fading, and dying before sunset. This body, which seems so full of life and strength and beauty, is beset with a thousand infirmities; it is young, it grows old, it is bent under the weight of years, it is let down into the grave, and is reduced to a handful of dust. And the soul that animates it, what of it? Bound to the body, it painfully drags it about, as does the snail its dwelling; it is tormented by a thousand passions; it is helplessly buffeted to and fro between truth and error, between virtue and vice, very often the slave of the latter, rarely the disciple and friend of the former; its life is a continuous web of weaknesses and follies, that bring the blush of shame to the cheek; remorse haunts

[1] "Humilitas est virtus, qua quis ex verissima sui cognitione sibi ipsi vilescit."—St. Bern., De Grad. Humil.

and torments it; the horror of death and the terror of the judgment to come frighten and appal it. If we lift our eyes to God, what do we see? What a difference between Him and us? Everything we have is His gift; we can call nothing our own except sin; He is eternal, unchangeable, immense, all-wise, goodness itself; we are hedged about in a little circle of time, in an imperceptible point of being, subject to incessant change, harassed with doubt, uncertainty, and error, and filled with guilty tendencies. What are we in God's presence? Poor, miserable creatures, worthy only of contempt and punishment. Once conscious of what we are and of our extreme wretchedness, we shall realize that it is our duty to humble ourselves, nay, that we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, who knows all and disposes all for our good.

If we bow our heads and subdue our pride in the presence of the majesty and power of God, and become little and despicable in our own eyes, this is the recompense that shall be ours: "*God will exalt us in the day of visitation.*" This is the great law that is luminous from end to end of the Gospel and which has its complete fulfilment in our divine Head, Jesus Christ. Would you be great in God's sight? Humble yourselves in your own eyes. Would you be first in the Kingdom of heaven? Be last here on earth, for the rule of Christ still holds: "*He who humbles himself shall be exalted. God gives grace to the humble.*" And when shall this exaltation be granted you in recompense for your humiliation? In the time of visitation, on the day when God will come to you,

on the day of your death, when this life will close and the everlasting life begin.[1]

To sustain our weakness amid the bitter struggles of this life, to strengthen us amid the trials and sufferings that are the inseparable accompaniments of those who tread the path of virtue, Holy Writ, as you see, my friends, keeps constantly before our minds the joys of the life to come: "*That He may exalt you in the time of visitation.*" Take away from man the hope of reward, shut the gates of heaven against him, tell him that the grave and the sepulcher are the end of all here below, and you will fill his heart with despair and desperation, you will drive him to curse his very existence and to execrate virtue as a dream and a torture. If there were not a life beyond this, if there were not a reward for the painful trials of virtue other than what the world gives, then would our existence here below be an insoluble mystery, a manifest contradiction; we should be, in the words of the Apostle, the most miserable of beings.

There are some men of our day, men, too, of learning and ability, who think and teach that it is unworthy of man to do good and practise virtue with the hope of a promised reward in the life to come. They affirm that this is to make traffic of virtue, to debase and disparage it; that virtue should be practised for its own sake, that no future reward, no matter what, should be expected,

[1]The expression "*in the time of visitation,*" is one that is frequently met with in the Sacred Books, and means the visitation God makes with His grace or chastisements, and again His judgment, either particular or general. It is a Hebrew and poetical form of speech.

and that believers who hope for such a recompense are no better than bargainers and barterers.

That virtue can be exercised without hope of future reward, purely for its own intrinsic excellence and with a view of pleasing God alone, no one doubts; this, we know, is exalted virtue; but to say that to practise virtue with the hope of reward is something blameable and unworthy of man, is a grave error, and is, moreover, an error condemned by Holy Writ, which, in order to encourage us in the battle of life, and in the exercise of the virtues, distinctly promises a reward for our efforts. It is also contrary to human nature, for every man desires his own good and he must seek in the hope of recompense the strength necessary to conquer his passions and to successfully overcome the obstacles in his path. These men, it is clear, have no adequate knowledge of human nature, and they so exalt virtue that it becomes not only difficult, but impossible of attainment, at least for the great majority of men.

Being now conscious of your own nothingness in the sight of God, and turning your thoughts to Him, "*Cast all your care upon Him.*" What beautiful and cheering words are these of the Prince of the apostles. He seems to say: "My children, you are borne down by the fears and anxieties that beset you and compass you on every side; you are as wayfarers on a journey to your fatherland; your backs are bent under an enormous weight. How many harassing cares, how many trials of the spirit, very often more piercing than those that afflict the flesh! Lay down all the cares that

distress you, put aside all the pains of body and spirit, gather them all together and cast them at the feet of God. Cast all your cares upon Him. This is a strong expression. St. Peter does not say "*lay them down before God,*" or "*offer*" them to God; or "*resign* yourself" to the will of God, or any such words, but he says: "*Cast*" all your care upon Him, that is, all trouble and anxiety, so that you will think no more of it and all fear will be dispelled.

Should we, then, go on living a thoughtless, careless life? Does St. Peter in this passage forbid us to occupy ourselves with our business and does he bid us to stand idly by with our hands at our sides, trusting all to Providence? By no manner of means. By so doing we should commit an offense against the providence of God, who requires our co-operation; it would be to tempt God and to transform a virtue into a vice. St. Peter, in the words of the Epistle, wishes to teach us not to be over-anxious or over-solicitous, but at the same time to do what we can; he condemns that excessive, restless anxiety, which trusts wholly to its own resources and forgets that above and beyond man there is a God who governs all things and directs all things to His own wise purposes.[1] A saint tells us to act as if there were no Providence and then we shall live as if we were wholly guided by Providence.

And why should we commit ourselves wholly to the arms of Providence? Because, says St. Peter, God has care of us: "*For He hath care of you.*"

[1] A cura non penitus liberamur, sed præcipitur ne solliciti simus. —St. Hieronymus, in Matt. vi.

God does not act as does an architect, who, having completed a house, leaves it and thinks no more of it; or as an artist, who, having finished a portrait, turns to something else. He is our creator, but He is also our preserver and sustainer, and never for a moment loses sight of the work of His hands; He thinks of each and He cares for each, as if he were His only work and there were no other.[1]

How, then, should we tranquilly trust to His fatherly providence? By throwing ourselves generously upon His bosom, as the sons of a loving Father; we honor Him, we recognize His wisdom, power, and goodness, and, if it is permissible to say so, we constrain Him to compass us about with His loving care. A son who confidently trusts himself to the affectionate care of his father, greatly honors him and is sure by his conduct to increase, if possible, his father's love for him. So, my friends, let us cast all our solicitude upon God, for He has care of us.

St. Peter, in bidding us place all our trust in God, does not mean that we shall consider ourselves absolved from all toil and exertion, for he adds: *"Be sober and watch."* In recommending sobriety and vigilance to us he couples them together, and in fact they can not be parted. Sobriety or temperance in all things is the mother of vigilance, the nurse of science and the guardian of chastity; as excess in eating and drinking induce somnolence and sloth and lead on to ignor-

[1]Tu, bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tamquam solum cures, et sic omnes tamquam singulos.—ST. AUGUSTINE, Confess., lib. iii., c. xi.

ance, to the gratification of sense and to the indulgence of the baser passions. *"Be sober."* Let your food be neither over-abundant or over-delicate; drink to extinguish thirst but not to gratify the palate; either in eating or in drinking never go to excess, never so indulge in either as to make the body torpid and obscure the mind; satisfy the wants of nature, but do not set fire to the passions or supply food to vice. How can he watch, or keep guard, or pray, or weigh his words, or regulate his conduct, whose body is heavy with excessive eating or drinking and whose mind is darkened by the fumes of wine? How can he, whose stomach is burdened with meat and drink, rise in thought and affection to God? How can he contemplate the pure light of truth and virtue whose mind is clouded by intemperance in eating and drinking? Be sober and you will be wakeful and watchful, and this is very necessary, because you are compassed about by great dangers and menaced by terrible foes.

Who are these enemies? St. Peter tells us: *"Because your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."* Our enemy is the world with its seductions and its deceits; our enemy is the body, which we bear about with us and in which the passions lie concealed and take shelter as do venomous serpents beneath a bush of blooming roses; our enemies are the wicked, who lay snares for our faith; but the great master enemy, he who gathers all our other enemies under his banner, who inspires them all, turns them loose against us to do us harm, is the devil; he is pre-eminently our adversary; he

seduced our first parents and continues his deadly work against us, their children.[1]

I well know, my friends, that there are some even, it may be, among believers, who, when they hear mention of the devil, shrug their shoulders, smile, and ask with an air of condescending superiority: "The devil? Who now believes in him? Has any one seen him? It is a belief that may be left to pious females of the lower class."

Now this belief in a malignant spirit, which we find at the very foundation of all the religions of the world, whether ancient or modern, is with us Catholics an article of faith; it is a truth that fills every page of Holy Writ, and we truly say that all the revelation of God from Genesis to Apocalypse centers around the drama of that great conflict constantly going on between the malignant spirits and the sons of God. It commenced in the Garden of Eden, it was continued on Calvary, and it will not cease until time is no more and the prince of darkness shall be forever cast out from this earth. Listen not to them who class the existence of demons among legends and fables, for with us Catholics it is an article of faith.

The devil hates God; he rebelled against God and God punished him. He hates us, because we are God's creatures and bear His image upon us; because God loves us and calls us to that blessed kingdom from which he was forever cast out. Look at him, says St. Peter, this implacable enemy of ours, he is like a lion, the king of beasts.

[1]Diabolus doctor mendacii, ipse est adversarius effectus generis nostri, inventor mortis, superbiæ institutor, radix malitiæ, scelerum caput, princeps omnium vitiorum, persuasor turpium voluntatum.—St. Augustine, Cont. Julian.

It is proud, ferocious, full of rage and fury; it bristles up, lashes its sides with its tail; a sinister light leaps from its eyes; it roars and the desert trembles; it leaps upon its prey, seizes it, rends it with its strong claws and crushes it with its teeth; its instinct is to kill and to feed upon its victims. The devil, like a hungry lion, roars, prowls about us in search of prey, and wo to him who comes within reach of his pitiless claws. Here St. Peter vividly describes in a few words the strength, the ferocity, the craft, the cruelty which the devil uses against us, and he warns us how necessary it is to be watchful and not to fall into his power.

The first condition to escape being his victim is to watch, because, though he is a terrible enemy and formidable by reason of his strength and ferocity, he is chained by Jesus Christ, and, like an animal shut up in a cage, can seize and devour only those who come within his reach. Keep, then, far away from this savage beast; beware of going into danger; do not unnecessarily put yourselves in the way of temptation; whosoever seeks danger and, without sufficient reason, exposes himself to temptation, is like one who imprudently goes too near a lion's cage and toys with the beast. He will be sure to feel the force of its claws and to furnish a meal to sate its hunger.

Nor is it enough to stand afar off from temptation, to flee from it or even to watch so as not to be caught and devoured by the devil; we must also face him and fight him: "*Whom resist ye, strong in faith.*" Sometimes we can flee from a temptation, but sometimes we can not; we can not escape it and we must face it, especially if we live

in the world. Then, my friends, we are like those who enter the cage of a lion and challenge its fury. What do they do? They never once turn their back upon it; they look with a steady, imperious gaze straight into the eye of the lion, and it sweeps around them and roars, but it never attempts to attack them; on the contrary, it is subdued by the light of their eyes. So also we, my friends, since we must struggle hand to hand with the evil one and the tempter, let us always keep our eyes, luminous with light of faith, steadily fixed upon him. A ray of that divine flame with which faith has lighted up our eyes, will make him recognize the presence of Christ, who conquered him, who will subdue him again, and render him harmless, and then, as the Psalmist sings, we shall trample under foot the lion and the dragon. This is what St. Peter means to teach us when he says: *"Whom resist ye, strong in faith."*

I know, St. Peter goes on, that you will suffer and suffer severely in this conflict, but remember that others are suffering as well as you; that your brethren scattered throughout the world are enduring what you endure: *"Knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world."* This letter was written by St. Peter in Rome about seven years before his death. The faithful, to whom he was writing, certainly could not have been ignorant of the sufferings and the persecution which the Prince of the apostles endured, and which together with him his brethren in the apostolate also suffered, and more or less all Christians scattered throughout the world. It

is a comfort, a sorrowful one, if you will, but still a comfort, to know that others suffer as we do, and suffer for the same cause and from the same motives for which we suffer. It is a comfort, because if others suffer with us and from the same motives, why should not we, too, suffer? Their constancy, their fortitude and example encourage and strengthen us. To suffer and struggle alone is disheartening: "Wo to him who is alone," says Holy Writ; companionship doubles our strength. It is a comfort because it revives our faith and sustains our hope to know that others, buoyed up by the same faith and the same hope, suffer and endure with us. Soldiers, who know that their companions in arms are gallantly fighting on other battlefields, are stimulated to rival them and courageously throw themselves into the thick of the fight. It was not, then, without a purpose that St. Peter reminded the faithful of Asia, that, if they were suffering, so were their brethren scattered over the face of the earth also suffering. We learn from these words of the apostle that even in that early age all the faithful, no matter how far separated from one another, regarded themselves as brothers, forming but one family, to all of whom the joys and sorrows of each were common.

This spirit of unity, or rather, of mutual charity and brotherhood, is characteristic of the Church of Jesus Christ; for when any of her members suffer for their faith or for justice' sake, whether on the far-away shores of the Orient, or amid the arid sands of the desert, or in the depths of the wilds of Africa, or the forests of America, all her

other members suffer with them, pray for them, and, if possible, succor them. This community of joys and sorrows, among the children of the Church, while it is the fruit of the same faith and the same hope, sustains and strengthens both.

St. Peter says in substance that we all suffer in this struggle with the prince of darkness and his allies, and then he adds that he can only express one wish, namely, that the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after we have suffered a little, will Himself "*perfect us, and confirm us, and establish us.*" God, the inexhaustible fountain of all grace, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, will complete His work in us; He will perfect us in patience and charity; He will sustain us in our conflict with the enemy; and when the slight sufferings and trials of this present life are over, He will establish us in the blessed glory to which He has called us.

This is the spirit which runs through all the teachings of faith and which radiates like a marvelous light from all the pages of the New Testament. We are placed on this earth to know, love, and serve God; we are placed here not to enjoy the goods of earth, but by toiling and striving to gain a blessed immortality. The whole Gospel of Jesus Christ is contained in this most simple truth, namely, to live holily on earth and thus to merit heaven, to suffer in this present life from love of God and to be happy with Him forever in the life to come. "This," says Lactantius, "is the sum total of all things, this is God's secret, this

is the mystery of the world.'"[1] Penetrated with this truth, the abridgment of all faith, St. Peter, seemingly carried out of himself, contemplating in the vision of faith the everlasting bliss that awaited him, and contrasting with it the trifle that is required to gain it, with a heart overflowing with joy and gratitude to God, like one who has come to the end of his pilgrimage and is bathed in an ocean of ineffable delights, breaks forth into this cry, this hymn of love: *"To Him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen."*

Poor miserable creatures that we are, we can give nothing to God, because we have nothing of our own, and He needs nothing; and yet in a sense we can give God something of our own; nay, we can offer Him a most precious gift, one wholly ours, one that He expects us to give Him and by which He is highly honored. And what is it? It is our will, our liberty. It is indeed a gift to us, a gift which God has bestowed upon us; but God has given it to us in such a way that it is ours, wholly ours, and we can, if we will, restore it to Him, but it is also in our power not to restore it to Him, and to do with it as we will. There is no gift by which God is more highly honored or that is more agreeable to Him than that of our free will, precisely because it is free and may do Him homage or refuse it. Never forget, my dear friends, that God is more honored by one free act of the will than by the service of all the irrational creatures of heaven and earth. Let us offer to God our will and we shall do this best by doing

[1] Hoc summa rerum, hoc arcanum Dei, hoc mysterium mundi.—LACT. lib. vii., c. vi.

His will in exactly observing His law. True, we can give God nothing, because He has no need of anything and all perfections are centered in Him; yet we can rejoice in His infinite greatness and in His infinite perfections, we can desire that His name shall be sanctified throughout all the earth, that His will shall be everywhere carried out; that is, we can desire that all men shall know Him and exalt and glorify Him, and that the cry of St. Peter may eternally go up to Him: *"To Him be glory and empire forever and ever. Amen."*

HOMILY VIII

At that *time:* The publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And He spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing; and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Re-

joice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xv. 1-10.

THE Gospel of this Sunday contains two parables, or, if you wish, two similitudes, the parable of the shepherd who goes in search of the sheep that went astray, and that of the woman who turns the house topsy-turvy seeking the piece of money she has lost. The two parables are distinct one from the other, but the purpose of both is identical, namely, to show forth clearly the ardent love of Jesus Christ for poor sinners, His desire for their conversion, and the lively joy He experiences once they return to Him.

My friends, no subject can be dearer to us or give us more pleasure than this; first, because of all the divine perfections, that of the goodness of God is the chief, and this goodness is set forth in to-day's Gospel with singular clearness and beauty; and, next, because we, being sinners, should earnestly strive to appreciate and bring home to ourselves in what the goodness of God consists, for in it all our hope is centered.

"At that time the publicans and sinners drew nigh to Jesus to hear Him." The discourse of Jesus, immediately preceding these words, was undoubtedly intended to inspire confidence in sinners. There is no mention of it in the Gospel of St. Luke, but in the parallel passage of St. Matthew His beautiful words are recorded, as is also the parable of the lost sheep. Jesus, we are

told by St. Matthew, stated that He had come to save all that had been lost: *"The Son of man is come to save that which was lost,"* and He developed this truth in words of incomparable tenderness, such as only His love could inspire. And what was the result? Publicans, or tax-gatherers, a class of ill repute and violently hated by the Hebrews, and every sort of public sinners, attracted and subdued by the charity of Jesus, and carried away by His gentleness and fatherly sympathy, drew near Him and listened to Him with filial trust and love.

We learn from the Gospel that there were two classes of persons who went to hear Jesus, but the motive of each in going was entirely different. First, there were the Scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees, the doctors of the Law and the priests; and next there were the plain people, and among these were notable those known as publicans and sinners. The purpose of the former in going to hear Jesus was not to be instructed, but to ask Him questions and to take Him in His words, and then to put Him to shame before the multitude and accuse Him to the authorities; the latter, on the contrary, went to Jesus with humble hearts and simple minds to hear and to learn; the former were, it may be, learned; they were certainly proud and malignant; the latter were ignorant, but they were honest and humble; the former, though learned, did not acknowledge the truth or accept it, rather they haughtily spurned it; while the latter, though ignorant, both acknowledged and embraced it.

My friends, precisely the same thing that took

place about the very person of Christ is constantly repeated in our own day, as all who have eyes can see. Now, as then, the poor and simple-hearted accept the truths of faith, while many of the learned and wealthy heed them not, spurn them, and at times make open war upon them. And why? The cause is ever the same; the same that cast the angels out of heaven, that led to the fall of our first parents, the cause that darkens the mind, hardens the heart, and deeply offends God; namely, pride.

But what frequently deeply pains and surprises us is to see men, apparently religious men and churchmen at that, who allow themselves to be carried away by an arrogant and critical spirit, thus imitating the Scribes and Pharisees. While the plain people and poor sinners listen eagerly to the word of God and receive it with simple and docile hearts, certain ecclesiastics find fault with the style of the preacher or with the preacher himself, and with a certain refinement of art set themselves to discredit him and his efforts, because he is not of their set, or because he is a favorite with the public, or because they themselves, like the Pharisees of old or like false brethren whom St. Paul often impales in his incomparable Letters, are eaten up with envy. If we trust their words, they are actuated by zeal for the truth, for the integrity of faith, and for love of souls, whereas in reality they are carried away by pride and envy, by party spirit and a frantic passion to rule. No, no, such as these do not love souls, they love themselves; they seek not God's glory, but their own; they have not the spirit of Jesus Christ, but that

of the Pharisees; they do not build up, they pull down; flee from them.

The Scribes and the Pharisees, seeing well-known publicans and sinners gathered about Jesus, listening to Him and hanging reverently upon His words, far from rejoicing in the hope of their conversion, gave evident signs of being offended; they looked at one another, contemptuously tossed their heads, and said complainingly: *"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."* There were two accusations, first, that of receiving sinners; next, that of eating with them.

The sect of the Pharisees was scrupulously observant of all the ceremonies of the Law and of the usages of their fathers; they were zealous for the external practices of worship and cared nothing for the interior spirit; they were proud and treated the poor with haughty disdain; regarding themselves as holy, they despised sinners and cast them out from their midst. These proud men are portrayed to life in these words: *"They said: Touch me not, for I am clean."* They regarded it as a fault to go near sinners, to speak to them, to deal with them familiarly. We have something of the same among the superior castes of India, and especially among the Brahmins, who think it criminal to associate with inferior classes or to touch what they have touched. Such excessive and blind pride in men seems incredible. Jesus came to save all, but especially those who had more need of being saved. Therefore He not only permitted sinners, customs officers, publicans, and all that class, reputed the most aban-

doned, to approach Him, but He Himself visited them, sat at table with them, and treated them kindly and with all charity. This conduct, it is needless to say, irritated the Pharisees; it was their own condemnation; they were furious and complained of it as of an enormous scandal: "*They murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.*" There is nothing more beautiful and touching than the behavior of Jesus toward sinners. He went among them, He taught them, He accepted their invitations to dine, and He, the personification of sanctity, seemed oblivious of their wretchedness and their crimes. There was no accent of sternness or severity in His voice and He uttered no stinging rebuke. Behold here the model for us priests; let Scribes and Pharisees frown darkly upon sinners, treat them harshly and arrogantly, but let us imitate the charity and tender compassion of Jesus when dealing with them,[1] and never forget the blessed words that on a certain occasion fell from His lips: "*I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*"

Still Jesus could utter terrible words, and many of them are recorded in the Gospel, but for whom? Never once for sinners, or publicans, or harlots, or customs officers, but for the Scribes and Pharisees, for those proud men, who were heartless to-

[1]Ex qua recolligite, quia vera justitia *compassionem* habet, falsa justitia (such as that of the Pharisees) *detestationem*.—St. Gregory, M., Homily xxxiv. in hunc locum. Yes, a zeal that impels us to be harsh and severe with poor sinners is a false, a harmful, and a Pharisaical zeal; it is self-love, wearing the mask of zeal. Sinners can be sternly reproved, and sometimes this is necessary, without forgetting charity, which may be the accompaniment of the most vehement rebuke.

ward sinners; these and these alone He scourged and uttered against them words that stung like scorpions, and a litany of woes, the very reading of which makes the blood run cold.[1]

This murmuring of the Scribes and Pharisees, because Jesus treated sinners kindly and familiarly, was heard by Him or at least known to Him, and from it He took occasion to show the character of the new teaching and to let them know and feel what the true spirit of God is like. As usual He spoke in a similitude. *"What man of you,"* He said, *"that hath a hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which is lost until he find it?"* This parable was drawn from a very ordinary fact, and one familiar to all His hearers, since a pastoral life among all Oriental peoples, and also among the Jews, was quite common and an honorable occupation. Say, for example, said Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees and to the multitude, that one of you were a shepherd and had a flock of a hundred sheep; that you led them up mountains and through valleys and into remote and desert places in search of pasture; that one of the sheep, which, as you know, are gentle and mild, placid and docile, but stupid, had while browsing among the bushes and grass, strayed away from its companions and got lost in the heart of a forest, what would you do? Would you not leave the ninety-nine in safe keeping and go at once to look for the one that was lost; would you not search for it through hills and valleys, through woods and ravines?

[1]Matt. xxiii. 13-33.

Would you not listen attentively if possible to hear its bleating? Would you not call it with your whistle; and would you spare yourself any fatigue to find it? And having found it you would hasten to it and seize it, but you would not beat it, nor would you drag it behind you on the road, or mistreat it, as it might deserve; you would on the contrary caress it, lift it upon your shoulders and, happy and joyful, carry it back to the flock. And arriving at the sheepfold what would you do? You would call in the neighboring shepherds, your friends and acquaintances, and forgetting the fatigue you endured and all your vexation, you would say to them: *"Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost."* Nothing could be simpler, more ingenuous and more graceful than this pastoral scene which Jesus Christ sketched in three short verses. There is in it a naturalness, an artlessness, a freshness of imagery, a simplicity of language, which not only equal but surpass anything similar in the classics of Greece or Rome.

Now who is this shepherd? Whom do the sheep represent who remained with the shepherd in the desert? Whom does the sheep that was lost and carried back to the sheepfold typify? Whom do the friends and neighbors called in to rejoice with the shepherd represent? The similitude is so luminous and simple that it explains itself, and the veil is so transparent that it need not be lifted to see what it conceals. Still a few remarks may not be amiss.

It is needless to say that the shepherd is Jesus Christ; the ninety-nine sheep that remained about

the shepherd and did not go astray, according to some, signify the faithful angels, whom Christ left in heaven, to come on earth later and assist erring men in working out their salvation; but it seems more fitting that these ninety-nine should typify the good, whether angels or men, and that the number ninety-nine is given solely to bring out more strikingly the benevolence of the Shepherd, who leaves them all and goes in search of the hundredth. The lost sheep typifies the sinner; the friends represent the good, both angels and men, and are likely introduced into the similitude to complete and embellish it.

If this were the only parable or similitude in all the Gospels it would be more than sufficient to reveal to us the benevolence of the divine Shepherd, His love of sinners and His yearning for their conversion. This parable of the Shepherd, the Man-God, who temporarily leaves the good to go in search of a single sinner; who is heedless of the difficulties of the way, of pain, fatigue, and danger; who has no peace until He finds the sheep and who having found it does not chide or reprimand it, but calls in his friends to rejoice with him that it is found and brought back, gives us a more vivid and lifelike image of Our Lord's love than could possibly be conveyed in a long and eloquent discourse. My friends and sinners, if such there are among those who hear me, look upon Jesus Christ, the kindest, the most loving of shepherds. You have strayed, it may be, far away from the fold; you have wandered alone into the woods and desert places, in danger at any moment of being set upon by wild beasts

and devoured by the wolf of hell; you have stupidly followed where your passions led, and you have been enslaved by the witcheries and the seductions of the world. And all the while Jesus has been pursuing you, calling out to you, begging you to come back to Him. Listen to his voice, stop, turn around, go forward to meet Him, throw yourselves into His arms; He will welcome you, take you to His Heart, and He will not chide you, and you will be once more His affectionate children and again experience all the sweetness of His love.

The striking contrast in this parable between the ninety-nine sheep and the one that was lost, and the conduct of the shepherd who leaves the former and goes to seek the latter, may seem strange to some. Does Jesus Christ value one sinner more than ninety-nine just? Was there ever a shepherd so thoughtless as wholly to abandon ninety-nine sheep and go in search of one that was lost? And can God love a sinner more than He loves the righteous? Such is not the case, and can not be, as you well know. The purpose of the contrast used in the parable is to bring out, according to our way of thinking, as clearly as possible the contentment and joy that the conversion of one single sinner brings to Jesus Christ and to His angels in heaven, and it does not mean or imply that sinners are dearer to God than are the just. Here is a mother, for instance, who has many sons, all of whom she tenderly loves. One of them, who it may be, has at times saddened her heart, falls sick, is despaired of, but he takes a turn for the better and recovers. Is it not true

that the mother rejoices more in the restoration to health of this son than in the fact that the others have never fallen ill? And will any one say that on that account she loves the one restored to health better than she does the others?

Jesus passes on to a second similitude, still illustrating the same idea. *"What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And, when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost?"* Here this question will likely arise in the minds of all: If in the preceding similitude Jesus represents Himself in the shepherd, whom does the woman represent in this? And, if the lost sheep is a figure of the sinner, of what is the lost groat a figure?

Fancy a poor woman who has only ten groats, or ten pieces of money, in the house. The groat or coin, of which the Evangelist speaks in this place, is equal to about eighty cents of our money. Now fancy that a poor woman has lost but one of these coins, which for her is quite a sum, what does she do? She takes a lamp, lights it, searches every corner of the house; she sweeps the floor, turns over the sweepings, looking anxiously for the coin, and, if she has the good fortune to find it, she seizes it, holds it up in her fingers, and in her joy calls in her friends and neighbors and showing it to them bids them share in her happiness,[1] saying: *"I have found the groat which I had lost."*

[1]The Greek text says that the woman lights a lamp and

St. Gregory explains this parable very beautifully. He says that we should see in this woman an image of the eternal Wisdom, who created man in His own likeness; that in the coin we should see an image of man, who bears in himself the likeness of God, as the coin bears upon it the effigy of the king by whose authority it was coined. Man, by sinning, marred the image of God in himself; and so marred, he is a figure of the lost coin. Then God, divine Wisdom, lights a lamp, or He becomes incarnate, and in this lamp or lantern of flesh conceals His light. He lights up the house or the world; He illuminates the conscience, He cleanses it and restores in it the image which has been so horribly disfigured and mutilated; and here we have a figure of the finding of the groat, or the saving of a sinful soul. It is needless to repeat that in substance the two parables have the same scope, namely, to show forth the love and joy of Jesus Christ and of all who are loyal to Him upon the return of one sinner doing penance.

Our divine Saviour seems to say: "You Scribes and Pharisees complain of Me, aye, you are scandalized, because I permit sinners to come to Me, because I receive them affectionately and eat at table with them; this is the very purpose of My mission; I am come for their sakes, because

sweeps the house. The Vulgate translates *evertit, to turn upside down,* and this version is a good one. Still the Greek is more natural, and it may be that the word *evertit* passed into the Vulgate through the slip of an amanuensis instead of *everrit,* which means to sweep. It is a trifle, but it is well to draw attention to it to show how a comparison of the different readings and a reference to the original text throw light on and bring out the true sense of the Scriptures.

the sick, and not the sound, need a physician, and willingly will I remain in their midst to complete My work among them. Nay, I will go farther; it is not a great deal to receive sinners and eat with them; I will go after them; I will search them out, as a good shepherd searches out a lost sheep, as a poor woman searches for a lost coin; and not only will I sit with them at their table, but I will Myself prepare a banquet for them and entertain them sumptuously. Bear in mind, this work is dear to Me, dear to My Father and to His angels, and even you should rejoice in it and aid Me in accomplishing it."

These two parables are a sublime lesson for us priests and ministers of Jesus Christ, and teach us that we should always and upon all occasions love sinners, seek them out, treat them affectionately, and thus lead them on to know the truth, to enter the Church, and to save their souls. They teach men, who are the heirs to the harshness and spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, that their method of dealing with sinners is wrong and that theirs is a false zeal. Even in our day, in spite of the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, there are those who find fault when poor sinners are dealt with kindly and gently, who can not bear their presence in Church, who at times drive them out of the Church by asperity of language, by rudeness of manner, by vituperation and invective, and who are surprised when others go among them, converse with them and treat them as charity dictates. Let all such keep before their minds the example of Jesus Christ; let them meditate upon the two parables which He spoke

to the Scribes and Pharisees, and which I have just explained.[1] He and He alone is our infallible guide and rule.

[1]It is well to compare verses 7 and 10, which harmonize perfectly. In verse 7 Jesus Christ speaks of the joy there is *in heaven* upon one sinner doing penance, and in verse 10 He speaks of the joy of the *angels of God*, which is the same thing. It is not to be understood that this joy augments the beatitude of the angels, which is always the same, God being its immediate source; it is only intended to give us to understand how pleasing the conversion of sinners is to God and His angels; they are the triumph of the mercy of God.

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY IX

BRETHREN: I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed to us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that made it subject, in hope: Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit: even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* viii. 18-23.

ST. PAUL has left us fourteen Epistles. In the Bible, that to the Romans (from which are taken the verses which you have just heard, and which are read in the Mass of this Sunday), is placed first. Of all the Epistles of St. Paul this justly holds the first place, not because it was written before the others, but because it was addressed to the Church at Rome, the mother of all other Churches, and the seat of the Primacy, and because it is the longest, and, considering the dogmatic teaching set forth in it, the most important. This Letter was written by St. Paul at Corinth,

when he was about to set out for Jerusalem, in the year fifty-eight of our era, or, at the latest, in the year fifty-nine.

The passage that I am about to explain is found in the eighth chapter of the Letter and is a very mine of theoretical and practical truth. In the opening verses of the chapter the Apostle speaks of the happy lot of those who are new-born in Christ, saying that they are loosed from the yoke of sin; and then of the unfortunate condition of those who live according to the flesh. He says that the Holy Spirit abides in those who are born again in Christ; that they should follow His promptings, and that in their inmost soul they have the testimony of the Holy Spirit that they are the sons of God. But on what condition will they receive the heritage of sons and heirs? On condition that they suffer with Christ, for suffering with Him they will be glorified with Him. And here begins the passage I am to explain.

"*For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*" This is a truth that is repeated on well nigh every page of St. Paul's Letters and one that can never be sufficiently brought home to us. Our life here below is one almost uninterrupted series of sufferings and distresses, coming from within and from without; a burden of grief that is ever weighing us down, the shadow of the cross that pursues us everywhere. In the midst of so many and so great afflictions, of torments so cruel and bitter, accompanying us everywhere along the path of life, what more consoling truth can we have than this:

"That the sufferings of this time can not be compared with the glory to come." What sufferings are these? Are they those that are a direct consequence of the profession of the faith of Christ and of a faithful observance of His precepts? These will undoubtedly merit for us eternal glory, but the Apostle does not mean these alone, but all the sufferings of this present life, *"of this time";* such as those that arise from toil, sickness, and the inclemency of the seasons, from fears, antagonisms, and poverty, and from all similar pains and trials; since even these, though common to all men, if endured in a spirit of faith and from a motive of love for Jesus Christ, will merit for us eternal life.

How comforting are these words of St. Paul to the Christian! He cay say and should say to himself: "I suffer, but my sufferings are a seed that will bear fruit, and the fruit will be never-ending bliss; between present sufferings and never-ending bliss there is no comparison; the sufferings are trifling, the bliss is beyond words; the sufferings are brief, a few days, a few years at most; the bliss is interminable, and the recompense is God Himself. A small seed, scarcely visible to the eye, is cast into the ground, and after a few days or months or years, it will produce fruit beautiful to the eye, grateful to the taste, fragrant to the smell; it will grow up into a tree, whose branches will bend under the weight of abundant fruit. This is an image of my suffering here below and of my bliss in heaven. This thought ought to be as balm to the wounds of my heart, it ought to mitigate and sweeten my sorrow, as the hope

of an abundant harvest rejoices the farmer, who toils at his plough and scatters the seed in the furrows of the soil.

St. Paul says: "*I reckon,*"[1] or I am certain, that the present sufferings will bring me glory incomparably greater than I merit. What certainty have we that we shall receive a recompense for our sufferings? Not the certainty of faith, for this can not be, since the Church has defined, against certain heretics, that no one can be certain without a special revelation that he is in the state of grace, and without grace no one can obtain eternal life,[2] but we can be certain with a *human* certainty, a certainty that comes of the consciousness of having faithfully discharged the duties proper to our state, of having done our best to please God, of having avoided sin—a certainty like to that which we have of being loved by friends, by father and mother, to whom we have honestly tried to prove ourselves loyal and obedient. This glory, the fruit of our present sufferings, the Apostle truly says, "*shall be revealed in us.*" The glory and the bliss that we shall enjoy in heaven will be but the flowering and the fruitage of the grace that we possess on earth, as the flowers and fruits of a tree are but the flowering and the fruitage of

[1]The Vulgate indeed has "*existimo,*" meaning *I believe, I think, I opine,* etc., which in meaning is quite different from *I hold as certain;* in the Greek we have λογέδομαι, which means: *from what has been said I argue or infer* with certainty. Here the word "*existimo*" has the same meaning it has in the Letter to the Philippians (iii. 8): *I count all things to be loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, and count them but as dung,* etc., where every shadow of doubt is excluded.

[2]Council of Trent, sess. vi, can. xiii-xli.

the small seed we cast into the earth; hence possessing grace, we potentially or in germ possess glory, and in suffering patiently here on earth the sorrows of this life, we bear within us the joy that will one day well up from our souls: "*That shall be revealed in us.*"

As we are all made for happiness and necessarily are attracted by it, as a stone is attracted by gravity to the earth, it follows that our hearts yearn with a longing desire for this recompense of our sufferings and for the glory wherewith we shall be clothed.

Not only that, says the Apostle, not only do we feeble beings of reason, buoyed up and impelled by grace, eagerly, ardently yearn for this future transformation, but "*irrational nature itself waits anxiously for the revelation of the sons of God,*" waits for the dawning of the day when their "*revelation*" and their heavenly glory shall be made manifest: "*For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God.*"[1]

Who is this creature who is said anxiously to await the revelation of the sons of God? Some think the angels are here meant, but this can not be, since in the following verse this creature is said to be made subject to vanity and this can cer-

[1]Literally the translation should run: "The expectation of the creature expects the revelation of the sons of God." The expression "*the expectation* that *expects*," is a form decidedly Hebraic and frequently to be met with in the Prophets and in the Psalms. It adds strength to the sentence and is equivalent to a *superlative.* Thus we read: *Expectans expectavi; veniens veniet et non tardabit,* which mean; *I have longingly* expected; *he will come at once.* In translating the phrase of St. Paul I have given it an Italian turn the better to make the meaning clear.

tainly not be true of the angels. Neither can the just or righteous man be meant, since it is said that this creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God, that is of the righteous, and hence, it is clear that this creature, that awaits the condition of the just, can not be the same as the just; nor can sinners or the wicked be meant, since they do not, nor can they, await this revelation, of which they are ignorant, or which, if they know, they spurn. It only remains, then, to say that the word creature here signifies all irrational nature, or the universe. St. Paul being an Oriental and nurtured on the study of the Prophets, by a most daring flight of fancy here represents not only all Christian souls, but also all irrational nature, in union with them, as ardently yearning for the fulfilment of the hope, which was to be realized in the eternal glory *"to be revealed in us."*[1]

But how can irrational nature unite itself with the souls of believers in this passionate desire for a future transformation? This manner of speech is certainly poetical. It attributes an eager longing to beings destitute of reason and will, and therefore incapable of desire; but the words contain a hidden and a profound meaning which I shall try, as best I can, to make clear. All material things have been created for man and for his use; many of them passing through marvelous and unceasing growth and change, are taken into

[1]The expression of St. Paul personifying all irrational nature and representing it as *expecting*, or anxiously yearning, is vivid and bold, if you like, still we Latin peoples have many similar or identical expressions: Thus we say *the earth smiles; the heavens weep; the storm rages; the sea roars; the mountains lift their proud heads; the wind sighs*, and the like.

his system, are assimilated and successively become part of his body and are dignified by being made instruments of his thought and will.[1] According to our way of expressing ourselves, the reason why material creatures aspire to a union with man, is because in him and together with him they are ennobled, participate in his spiritual and physical life, and feel that their lot is indissolubly bound up with his destiny. This is why all these irrational creatures, in their own way, as supplementing man, as forming his retinue and being part of him, join him in yearning for the coming of the day of universal transformation, when the glory of the elect and of the sons of God will be resplendent before the eyes of all. St. Paul goes on developing his thought. Let us follow him.

"For the creature was made subject to vanity." All creatures that exist upon the earth and that in the present order of things, by the will of the Creator, serve man, undergo incessant change and transformation; they pass from inorganic into organic vegetable and animal life, and finally into human nature, and then return to inorganic matter. If we observe what is taking place round about us and in our own bodies, we shall see that

[1] I will repeat here what I once read in an exegetist of name and which, while it sounds strange, may be true. Every one knows that our bodies continually assimilate matter by breathing and nutrition, and having assimilated it, little by little cast it off. Might it not be in the designs of God that all the matter of this world should be honored by successively becoming part of our bodies, and that, when in the course of ages this work of transubstantiation should have been accomplished, this cycle of assimilation completed, then would come the end of the human family and the final resurrection of the body would take place? It is an hypothesis like so many others.

there is a ceaseless movement, a perpetual building up and a breaking down of creatures, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly; that life is a condition of death and death a condition of life; that no visible creature escapes this law; that all things are changing and live but to die; that from death are derived the seeds of new life, and that every new life has in it the seeds of death. Not only are all these creatures subject to this transformation going on ceaselessly without a moment's intermission, but they are made to serve, alas, how often, and contrary to their end, as instruments of disorder and agencies for offending God. Air, light, and water, the earth and its most beautiful and precious productions, the whole vegetable and animal kingdom, all things are by the perversity of man diverted from their true end and made to become instruments of sin. Inasmuch as these creatures are perpetually, without an instant's respite, subjected to the travail of transformation and constrained to serve a use contrary to their natural end, they are said by St. Paul "*to be made subject to vanity.*" A sublime expression this, and one that represents all the world as being, like man, in a state of rebellion, whose destiny it shares, being subject to it as a means to an end. This visible world, continues St. Paul, does not willingly submit to this law of continuous change, of alternate life and death, of strife and rebellion against its Creator, to which it is subjected by man, "*not willingly,*" but it adapts itself to it, because the Creator so wills; it accommodates itself to it in the hope that a day will come when this toilsome struggle will cease, when

the heavens and the earth will be renewed, and when all will be composed in unalterable and perfect peace: "*For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that made it subject, in hope.*" Yes, all irrational nature, as well as men and Christians, cries out in its own language for a cessation of its present state, against which it instinctively rebels; its cry, a feeble echo of ours, is this: "When, O Lord, wilt Thou make an end of my travailing? When wilt Thou grant me peace? When shall I, like man and through man, be renewed and serve Thee according to my nature?"

And this is but just, as St. Paul says: "*Because the creature* (irrational) *also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.*" It is not easy to understand this passage of the Sacred Text, but it is no doubt an explanation of what goes before. All irrational nature is, as it were, the cradle, the nurse of man, his royal palace; he is its king; at the end of all things, when man will again resume his body, then radiant with new and immortal life, so too will nature, like unto man, and possibly that man may be all the more excellent and glorious, be also renewed, "*The creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the children of God.*"[1]

Of what sort will be this renewing of irrational

[1]The Letters of St. Paul are full of Hebraisms, and the phrase: "*unto the liberty of the glory of the children of God,*" is certainly one of them, and means "*unto the glorious liberty,*" etc. This sort of expression is frequently to be met with, as, for example, "*in laudem gloriæ gratiæ suæ; verbum veritatis,* the second substantive being used in place of an adjective.

nature, this faint image of the renewing of man? How will its servitude end, and what will be its liberty, of which St. Paul makes mention? All we know is that it will take place, but what it will be like we know not, and only by inference can we form an idea of it. The heavens and the earth will be renewed; they will be an abiding place worthy of the glorified man; they will be withdrawn from the influence of all evil, physical and moral; and to know this is enough.

From this exalted and beautiful teaching of St. Paul it is manifest that the end of all irrational creatures is bound up with the end of man, and is so dependent upon it, that, if the expression may be allowed, they will be happy or unhappy with a happiness or unhappiness of their own; and this is but just, since irrational creatures are created for man's use and service, and, as a consequence, the lot of the principle carries with it the lot of the secondary. The elements of which our body is made up will accompany the soul, and will be forever happy with it in heaven, or suffering with it in hell, because the union of the two is an everlasting union, and hence it is we who determine the eternal lot of the material world. The language of the Apostle in this passage is poetical indeed, but withal eminently philosophical and true.

This idea of the yearning expectation of irrational nature is still further enforced and more clearly brought out in the following verse: "*For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain even until now.*" This groaning and travailing of all irrational creatures, as if

suffering the pains of childbirth, while looking forward to its liberation and final transformation, make us realize how intimately they are bound up with man and how they chafe and fume at the disorder and violence in which at present they are so often constrained to participate. This phrase of the Apostle calls to mind the no less energetic phrase of the Book of Wisdom in which it is said of God that *"He will arm the creature for the revenge of His enemies."* Ah, my friends, let us keep these words and the truth they contain constantly in mind. Every time we abuse creatures by committing sin and turning them against their Creator, they, so to say, are roused to indignation against us; they suffer and groan, they yearn for the moment when they will break the yoke of corruption which we force upon them; if we make them now an instrument of sin and of guilty pleasure, they will be then an instrument and a weapon of God for our punishment.

After this short and brilliant digression on all irrational creatures, which so ardently and longingly wait and importune to be set free and to be renewed in newness of life, St. Paul turns again to the faithful, whom he addresses thus: *"And not only it,* that is the creature, *but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body."* Yes, the universe yearns and groans, but we, too, we Christians, the first-fruits of the Church, or of the garden of Christ, we, who have received the first and most abundant gifts of the Spirit, we, too, groan and yearn with all

creatures and more earnestly and ardently than they and from the very depths of our souls. Tormented by anxiety and anguish from within, a mark for calumny and persecution from without, banished, scourged, cast into prison, dragged before tribunals, regarded as outcasts and the refuse of the earth, life has become a burden to us: "*So that we are weary even of life,*" and we look forward weeping to the day, when grace, or our adoption as sons of God, will open to us the portals of heaven and we shall be free from this body of death and clothed with a body impassible and glorified: "*Waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.*" This agonizing cry of the Apostle, who looks forward to the resurrection of the body and to the glory of heaven, yearns for it and implores it, is like unto the cry of Job who, racked and consumed by the ravages of leprosy, exclaimed: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth and that in the last day I shall rise out of the earth.*" This is the cry that goes up from the heart of every believer, from every wayfarer in this land of exile, who endures the miseries of this present life and is pressing on toward his true country and longing to possess God. Let it also be the cry that goes up from our hearts, from us for whom this world has no illusions and who are longing for our home in heaven.

HOMILY X

At that *time:* When the multitudes pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the Lake of Genesareth. And saw two ships

standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said to Him: Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing: but at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking: which, when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed Him.—GOSPEL, *Luke* v. 1-11.

JESUS began to preach in Galilee and, as St. John tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel, called certain disciples to follow Him, and among them Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, and the brothers James and John, all Galileans. With them He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the

Pasch and then returned into Galilee and to Nazareth. In the meantime the disciples, to support themselves, went back to their nets, for they were nearly all fishermen, but only for a short time. Jesus went from Nazareth to Capharnaum and entered again upon His public life, and here took place the miracle narrated in the Gospel, which is the subject of this homily, and which, as we shall see, finally determined the first and principal disciples to follow Him for good. They were twice called by Jesus, first, on the banks of the Jordan, whither they had gone to hear John, and where Jesus Himself was baptized; and again and definitely upon the shores of the Lake of Genesareth, as narrated by St. Luke in the fifth chapter of his Gospel. And now let us turn to the explanation of the Gospel.

"*When the multitude pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, He stood by the Lake of Genesareth, and He saw two ships standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets.*" These words are so clear that they need no explanation; but we may draw from them a few practical lessons.

Consider Jesus, the multitude, and the apostles. Jesus stands there on the shore of the lake, then so radiant and beautiful, alone, without retinue, as the lowliest of the sons of Israel, in the midst of a crowd, who had come out from the neighboring cities and hamlets. What is He doing? He is teaching that multitude. The Gospel does not tell us what He was saying, but we can easily infer that, according to His custom, He was speaking to them of the kingdom of Heaven and of those

simple and exalted truths that ravished the people who hung in ecstasy upon His words.

Consider the crowd. The people gather around Him, press upon Him, crowd one another, hungry to hear the word of God. What a sight, my friends! Jesus Christ speaks to the people and the people hear Him reverently and in silence. It was morning, and the sky smiled serene and tranquil above them; before them was the beautiful lake, its lovely shores studded with populous villages; in the distance were the hills, covered with olive orchards and vineyards, rising one above the other and stretching away to the west toward Thabor, and on the north toward distant Hermon and Libanus. It was along the shores of this lake that Jesus Christ, standing in the midst of fishermen and sons of the soil, sowed the seeds of that doctrine, which was to be borne to the four corners of the earth and to transform the world.

Consider the apostles. They had come out from their boats and after washing and mending their nets, mingled with the crowd to hear the divine Master. I venture to say that there were neither the rich nor the learned among the multitude; they would disdain to associate with people so poor and humble; but Jesus did not disdain to tell those lowly fishermen and peasants of the kingdom of Heaven; on the contrary, He found His sweetest joy in doing so: "*He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*" And those apostles, already called to follow Jesus Christ, still continued to ply their trade of fishermen, certainly not as a diversion, but that they might thereby support themselves. Although set apart

for the conquest of the world, they did not complain of their poverty or of the toilsome life they led, and which, even later on, they did not change; rather they rejoiced with a holy joy in providing for their wants with their own hands: "*You yourselves know that for such things as were needful for me and them, that are with me, these hands here furnished.*"

"*Jesus seeing the two boats went up into one of them that was Simon's.*" Jesus having finished speaking to the multitude and wishing to escape from it and to perform the miracle, of which we shall speak presently, entered into one of the boats, which, the Evangelist informs us, was that of Simon Peter. Of course you well know that Jesus Christ could not do anything at hazard; no man of sense does so act, and how could He who is Wisdom itself? Even seriously to entertain such a thought would be blasphemy. Why, then, did Jesus of the two boats select that of Peter, and on it move out into the lake and there perform the miracle? And why does the Evangelist St. Luke specially note this fact? The Fathers see in this fact a premonition of the supreme power which Jesus later conferred on St. Peter. We can not be saved unless we accept the doctrine of Jesus Christ; now where does Jesus announce this doctrine? From what boat does He preach to men? From Peter's boat; we must, therefore, be in Peter's boat if we would learn the true teaching of Jesus Christ. The boat is the symbol of the Church, of this there is no possible doubt; the Fathers, interpreters, and ancient symbolism all bear witness to it. But there are many boats or

churches, which call themselves the boats or churches of Jesus Christ. There is the boat of the Greek Church, of the Nestorian Church, of the Eutychian Church, of the Russian, of the Anglican, and of others.[1] Each of these noisily protests that it is the boat, or the Church of Christ, and warns men to enter into it if they would be saved.

[1]The Greek Photian Church, as is well known, does not acknowledge the divine institution of the primacy of Peter. It is governed by patriarchs and by an ecumenical synod, whose seat is at Constantinople; but it is a structure that continues to exist by its inertia, if I may so speak. The creation of each new State in the Ottoman Empire carries with it, as a consequence, a new national Church. The last century has seen the rise of the Hellenic Church, the Montenegrin Church, the Servian, the Roumanian, and the Bulgarian; this is of course natural, as there is no common center.

Of the Nestorian and the Eutychian Churches there is no need to speak, because they are insignificant and sunk in the grossest ignorance; they preserve of Christianity little more than the name.

The condition of the Russian Church is quite different; first because it is intimately united with the imperial power of the Czar, and dependent on him; next, because it is strongly organized; again, because its membership is made up of peoples uncultured, it is true, but young and vigorous; and finally, because the vast field of the Orient is open to it. Is there any likelihood that the Greek Church will return to the bosom of the Catholic Church? Some have hoped for this and possibly do so still. Would that it might be! But taking a purely human view of the matter, the return of the Russian Church to the Catholic is very distant. Only last year Pobedonoskeff, the Grand Procurator of the Russian synod and its leading spirit, in reply to a distinguished personage, who was showing him the necessity of a union between the Catholic Church and the Russian, said: "The Orthodox Russian Church and the Roman are two equal sisters, who should mutually respect each other. The Russian Church has too many interests firmly binding it to schism and heresy; the ignorance of the people together with the skepticism of the upper classes, the imperial autocracy, the mistrust of Poland and the hatred against it, raise an insurmountable barrier between the Russian Church and the Roman."

Of the Anglican Church there is no need to speak. The solemn declaration of the Holy See, regarding the nullity of Anglican orders, a declaration made necessary because of special circumstances, has added another obstacle to pre-existing ones and makes still more difficult its return to Catholic unity.

Now I ask, where is Christ? From what boat does He teach? From Peter's boat and not from the boat of any of the others. Let us then always remain in Peter's boat, confident that there Jesus Christ is with us, and that having Him we have also His teaching and His truth.

Standing in Peter's boat, what did Jesus Christ teach the multitude? The Gospel does not say, but it is natural to believe that He spoke to them, as He always did to the crowds that followed Him, of the truths of the kingdom of Heaven.

"Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." The sea, or the Lake of Genesareth, is a figure of the world; the fish represent men; the bark of Peter, which, carrying Jesus, rides the waves, is a figure of the Church. Jesus commands Peter and his companions to let down their net for a draught. But when? Not until He had spoken to the people. And why so? Because He wished to teach us that men must be first instructed, and only then gathered into the Church; the seed must first be sown and then the crop reaped; first make known the truth and then gather the fruit. As Jesus Christ says farther on, the apostles and their successors were to be fishers of men. But how were they to take men? The noblest part of men being spiritual, they can not be taken in nets, as fish and birds are taken, which, once their bodies are seized, can not escape. By seizing the bodies of men you gain nothing; to secure men you must get possession of what is noblest in them, their souls. As the soul can be neither seen nor touched, how is it to

be secured? Birds and fish are taken by enticing them with the food which they like; so also the soul of man is taken by laying before him the only food for which he hungers, the food of truth. Truth subdues the mind, the mind carries the will with it, and having gained the mind and the will, you have secured the entire man. And how is the food of truth set before men? The fisherman offers his food to the fish by attaching it to the line of his fishing-rod or he scatters it about in the neighborhood of the nets; we set truth before the minds of men by word of mouth, by instructing them, and hence Jesus Christ said to His apostles: *"Go, teach, teach;"* that is, set before the minds of men the food of truth by word of mouth; this will stir the wills of upright men and draw them to you. This is why Jesus, after instructing the crowds, commanded the nets to be let down. Let us go on.

"And Simon answering said to Him: Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing." At that time, as even now to some extent, it was customary to fish during the night. The apostles had toiled alone; Jesus was not with them, and they had taken nothing. Jesus had so disposed that they should not, in order to bring into clearer light the miracle that He wrought, to give a most important lesson to His beloved apostles, and to determine them to follow Him for good and all.

Peter, who was ever the same, resolute, ardent, straightforward, though he had already declared that he had toiled in vain the whole night long and though he had no reason to hope for better

luck now, still to show his docility and readiness to obey, said: "*At Thy word I will let down the net.*" For the disciple the word of the Master is everything; he at once submits his own judgment, takes no heed of fatigue, suggests no difficulty, expresses no doubt; the Master has spoken and that is enough: "*At Thy word I will let down the net.*"

My friends, when the voice of duty or the voice of authority speaks, although what is spoken seems hard and not quite reasonable to us, let us imitate the generous alacrity of St. Peter, and say: "Lord, I obey."

The apostles let down the net and scarcely had they begun to draw it toward them when they perceived that "*they enclosed a great multitude of fishes and their net broke,*" and seeing that they could not get so great a quantity of fishes into their boat by themselves, "*they beckoned to their partners, that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them; and they came and filled both ships, so that they were almost sinking.*" All these particulars of the miracle, given with the greatest conciseness and simplicity, are so clear that they represent to us this scene which took place on the shores of the lake almost as vividly as if we ourselves had been eye-witnesses of it.

History tells us that fish were very abundant in that lake; and we also know that under certain conditions and in certain seasons it is possible to take an extraordinary draught, and none knew this better than Peter and his companions, who were skilled in their art and most familiar with

the lake; but the particular circumstances attending this draught were so clearly of a miraculous character that they admitted no possible doubt. The apostles had been casting their nets the whole night through and to no purpose; there was no indication of any kind to lead them to believe that a change had taken place, or that they could hope for so abundant a haul; and if there had been such a change the apostles would surely have known or at least suspected it. Again, it is clear from the narrative that scarcely had the net been let down when it was filled with fish. Finally, the quantity of fish taken was amazing, for we are told that the net was breaking from the weight and that they filled the other two ships, *"so that they were almost sinking."* All the circumstances prove conclusively that the fact was not *natural,* but *supernatural* and miraculous, and that it could not be attributed to any one except to Him, who, in spite of difficulties suggested by Peter, said confidently: *"Let down your nets for a draught."*

The effect of this miracle upon all the apostles present, but especially upon Peter, was instantaneous and enormous: *"Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell at the knees of Jesus, saying: Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord."* Here, again, Peter as usual lays bare his whole soul. He had seen the miracle of Jesus Christ; he could not doubt of it; in the heap of fish before him he could touch it with his hand. He forgets everything; he sees only his Master and himself; startled by the great heap of fish and interiorly illuminated, he recognizes in his Master, the

worker of the miracle, the Prophet and the Messias; and in himself, a poor sinner; and conscious of his unworthiness and in the ardor of his faith, he casts himself at the feet of Jesus, "*he fell down at the knees of Jesus,*" and cried out: "*Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*"

St. Augustine urgently asked of God two favors: "*Lord, that I may know Thee, that I may know myself.*" The knowledge of these two things is the height of Christian wisdom; to know God in order to love Him and serve Him; to know oneself in order to correct and amend one's failings; to know God in order to depreciate oneself; to know oneself in order to appreciate God alone. In our knowledge these two things can not be separated from each other, any more than an effect can be separated from its cause; he who knows a cause, knows also its effect. Whosoever places himself in the presence of God, makes Him the object of his thoughts, contemplates His greatness, His power, His immensity, and His wisdom, and looking into the ocean of the Being of God, considers its eternity, its immutability, and all its other perfections, is simply overcome and bewildered at the sight of His grandeur and majesty. If, then, he turns his gaze from God upon himself and thinks what he is, he realizes and feels that he is small and feeble, ever changing and full of miseries; that of himself he has nothing; that whatever he has or can have he receives from God, on whom he is as dependent as is a lamp on the cord that sustains it. Realizing all this, what God is and what he is, he is forced to break forth into that cry so familiar to the saints:

"Lord, Thou art all; I am nothing, aye, worse than nothing; I am a sinner."

St. Peter did not stop at recognizing the greatness of His Master and his own weakness and nothingness; carried forward by the vehemence of his language and hardly realizing what he was saying, he added: *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."* He desired Jesus to go away from him, feeling that he himself, sinner that he was, was not worthy to be near one so holy. If any one at that moment had said to Peter: "Do you really wish Jesus to depart from you?" he would certainly have replied: "No, no; I believe in Him, I love Him, I wish to follow Him always and everywhere, I must be always with Him." Why, then, did Peter ask Jesus to depart from him? This was an expression of the holy fear that came upon him on finding himself in the presence of Jesus and of the piercing love he felt for Him and which carried him out of himself, and hence while he cried out to Jesus to depart from him, he was clinging as a child to His knees and would not be separated from Him. My friends, when we are in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, or better still, when we receive Him into our souls in holy communion, let us make our own the sentiment of faith and reverence, of fear, love, and profound humility, with which the Prince of the apostles was filled, when he stood in the presence of Jesus in his boat on the Lake of Genesareth. A soul that recognizes its own unworthiness and in the presence of Jesus confesses that it is sinful, becomes the object of His most endearing affection.

The Evangelist, as if explaining the action of Peter and his beautiful words, goes on to say: "*For he was wholly astonished* or frightened *and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes, which they had taken.*"[1] And why should Peter and his companions be frightened? Certainly it was but natural that they should be amazed and even delighted, but not that they should be frightened. When we witness an extraordinary and superhuman occurrence, behind which we see the shadow and the majesty of God Himself, the author of it, we feel ourselves thrilled through and through and seized with holy terror. And who would not be, in the presence of infinite Greatness and Power, before which we feel, as we never felt before, our utter imbecility and nothingness. Go through all the writings of the Old Testament and the New and you will find that, wherever God manifests Himself or His power, whether on Thabor, on Horeb, or on Sinai, or in His miracles, fear and terror are the common and natural consequences of such manifestations in those who witness them.

St. Luke speaks of the fright of Peter and of *all* those who were with him, and then, as if correcting himself, he thinks it necessary to name two, who were present in another boat, because, after Peter, they were nearest to the Master and because, after this miracle, they were called to follow Him for good: "*And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners.*"

Simon Peter was still at the feet of Jesus, dis-

[1]The Vulgate has the word "*stupor*," but it is evident that it

tracted and not knowing what to do. Jesus to comfort him said, with a voice thrilling with love: "*Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*" While comforting him with these words Jesus clearly made known to him that he was called to the apostolate. He said to him in effect: "Henceforth you will take something quite different from fish; you will be a fisher of men." The metaphor is graceful, beautiful, and natural, and needs no explanation. Jesus very frequently indicates the sacred ministry under the figure of fishing, and the figure denotes wonderfully well the reality which it is intended to express.

And here allow me to make an observation that arises naturally out of the Sacred Text. At sight of the miracle Peter's whole self was revealed to him and in the presence of his companions he frankly confessed that he was a sinful man and not worthy to be near Jesus. To this act of humility Jesus replied by giving him the splendid promise that he would be an apostle: "*Henceforth thou shalt fish for, or catch, men.*" It is ever thus. Whosoever humbles himself, God always exalts, and to Peter, who protested that he was a sinner, he gave a veiled promise of the highest prerogative of the apostolic dignity.

The miracle of the prodigious draught of fish, here narrated by St. Luke, is barely mentioned by St. Matthew, who however gives certain details that throw light on the whole story.[1] St. Matthew says that, besides the three apostles above named,

was the stupor that arises from fright or terror. This is clear from the fact that Jesus said to him at once: "*Fear not.*"

[1]Matt. iv. 18.

Andrew, the brother of Peter, also witnessed the miracle. He was likely in the boat with Peter. Moreover, St. Matthew says that the words: "*I will make you to be fishers of men,*" which according to St. Luke's narrative were addressed only to Peter, were spoken by Our Lord to all, and that to all likewise were spoken the words: "*Come after Me,*" and that all followed Him. St. Luke leaves the words: "*Come after Me,*" to be understood; but he expresses what is in effect the same idea, when he says: "*And having brought their ships to land, leaving all they followed Him.*" What an example of alacrity and faith, of obedience and generosity the apostles give us! True, they were poor, they lived by the labor of their hands; they had only their wretched boats, their nets, and possibly a poor hut in neighboring Bethsaida; Peter had his mother-in-law, James and John had their father and mother; all had relatives and friends, and they loved their lake and its enchanting shores; He who said to them: "*Come, follow Me,*" was a stranger to them, and still poorer than they; He had neither a home nor whereon to lay His head, neither a boat nor a net, and yet instantly, at His word, they followed Him: "*Leaving all things they followed Him.*" What will become of them? What fortune awaits them? What reward? For how long and whither will they follow Him? On what conditions? Such thoughts did not even come into their heads; they heard the mystic words: "*Come, follow Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men,*" whose meaning they did not even perfectly comprehend, and still they did not hesitate a moment. They set

out with Him, never again to leave Him, and the first to do so was that same Peter who said: "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" Let us, then, reassure ourselves once for all of the miracle of the draught of fish; admire the potency of the word of Christ in the calling of the apostles, and their generous docility and alacrity in obeying it.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XI

DEARLY BELOVED: Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing: for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek after peace, and pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers; but the countenance of the Lord upon them that do evil things. And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.—EPISTLE, 1 *Peter* iii. 8-15.

THE Epistle of the Mass of this Sunday, just read for you, is taken from the third chapter of the first Letter of St. Peter to the faithful scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor. As you will have noticed in hearing this short passage read, every verse, well nigh every word, contains wise and most important moral teaching. Accustomed as we have been from our earliest years to hear these sacred truths, we give little

attention to them; they make only a slight impression upon us. They are like the sun that rises morning by morning from below the horizon, flooding the earth with light; they excite no surprise in us. But it was not the same with the early Christians, especially with those who had just come out from paganism. I can fancy that these Christians, on first hearing these truths, so simple and yet so sublime, so conformable to the principles of natural reason and to the noblest sentiments of the heart, and yet so novel, were filled with amazement and gratitude and cried out: "How beautiful is this religion and how excellent! Blessed be He who in His mercy made it known to man! Blessed, too, are they who embrace it and live according to its teachings."

Without further introduction let us go on at once, not to the explanation of these truths, for they need none, so clear are they, but to certain considerations and applications of them, suitable to every age and condition. In the verses immediately preceding, St. Peter warns wives to be subject to their husbands and to be more solicitous for the beauty that is within, the true beauty of woman, than for external ornament; he also exhorts men to honor their wives, to live peaceably with them, that both may possess their everlasting heritage. Then he continues: "*Be ye of one mind, having compassion one of another, lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble.*" Is it possible, my friends, to condense into so few words a greater number of beautiful and weighty moral maxims? "*Be ye of one mind,*" that is, let all have one mind and one heart. On every page

of the apostolic Epistles, notably of those of St. Paul, the necessity of living in concord is insisted on. External concord, concord of word and speech, concord in the family and in the social life, if it is to be a real and enduring concord, must be the expression of internal concord or peace; it must well up from the mind and heart. Let us all be guided by the same principles, profess the same truths, love one another as brothers, and concord will reign among us. You will say that it is all very well to have the same principles, to cling firmly to the same truths; this will, indeed, be a basis of concord; but is it possible to find any body of men who are agreed in acting on the same principles and holding the same body of truths? Would you have men give up their convictions? A diversity of speech and judgment is a necessity in the present order of things; it arises for the most part from inequality of minds, from difference in instruction and from a hundred other causes, so that concord or agreement in such a variety of thought and character is impossible.

No, it is not impossible, my friends; for concord can be maintained, without any invasion of individual liberty, by the practice of mutual charity. The organs of the voice are different from one another, but they can be harmonized; mutual respect, and toleration, the daughter of charity, can insure the most perfect concord, even among men, who, as regards principles, differ most widely and most profoundly from one another. Let us endeavor to be united in truth and we shall have concord, and if we can not be united in holding the same truths, we can at least be united in

charity and we shall all equally enjoy its blessing in external harmony.

I know, my friends, that some think that a difference of faith and religion must break the bond of charity and beget discord and hatred. This is an error. Does not God love sinners and does He not call them to repentance? And did not Jesus Christ die for them? If God loves them, and if Jesus Christ died for them, why should not we love them, though they do not profess the same faith with us? Of course we can not approve their doctrine and their errors, since to do so would be to offend God, but we can respect and love them, and treat them as brothers, for they, too, as well as we, were created by God, called to the same faith, and Jesus Christ died for them as well as for us. God forbid, then, that we should harbor a shadow of hatred or rancor against those who do not profess our faith or who, having professed it, have abjured it. While we deeply deplore both the fall of the latter and the unbelief of the former, we respect both, we love them always and cordially, and hope to live in perfect concord with them.

"*Having compassion one of another,*" St. Peter adds; that is, we must weep with those who weep and suffer with those who suffer. When one member of the body suffers, all the others in a manner suffer also, and the body is enfeebled, for the pain of one member is common to all; so, also, when one dear to us suffers, we suffer with him, because the love that binds us together, makes our two souls one, and the sorrow of one is the sorrow of both. And we should in a measure have the same

feelings whenever we see a brother suffering; if we love him according to the Gospel rule, his sufferings will be our sufferings; and then we shall be compassionate and the fruits of charity will be made manifest, since it is not possible really to feel compassion for the sufferings of others and to do nothing to relieve them. If a thorn is driven into the left hand will not the right at once set to work to draw it out?

"*Being lovers of the brotherhood.*" Beautiful and holy words. Toward the close of the last century men proudly proclaimed the universal brotherhood of men, as if they had discovered this brotherhood and were its first apostles. Let them meditate upon these few words, "*Be ye lovers of the brotherhood,*" written nineteen centuries ago by the Prince of the apostles.

Not only should we "*be of one mind*" and "*have compassion one of another,*" but we should love one another as brothers. Among brothers, who are really such and who love one another, all things are common; a misfortune that befalls one befalls all. My friends, what a blessed world this would be if the brotherhood taught by Jesus Christ and here proclaimed by St. Peter reigned among us and manifested itself in works! Men speak much and eloquently of brotherhood; the word is constantly on their lips, but do their works justify their words? They talk of brotherhood and war with one another; the strong oppress the weak, the rich rob the poor, the cultivated despise the illiterate, class is arrayed against class, the one breathing hatred against the other. Is this the brotherhood that Jesus Christ brought on

earth, and that St. Peter proclaimed when he wrote these words: *"Be ye lovers of the brotherhood?"* I leave you to answer. St. Peter continues.

"Be ye merciful." This is a more lively and a keener feeling than compassion. It seems strange and incredible that some ancient philosophers, and among them Seneca, should have dared to teach that pity toward the afflicted is a mental weakness, an infirmity of soul, that must be combatted and despised. Pity, sympathy with the suffering and distressed, is a virtue that ennobles human nature and makes it like unto God, who is goodness and mercy itself; to be insensible to the griefs of others is to go against nature; it is to be like stones and plants; it is to be inferior to the beasts of the field, who at times seem to be capable of sympathy and to feel a real pity for their young. Let us never forget these sublime words of Jesus Christ: *"Be ye merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful,"* and *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."*[1]

"Be ye modest and humble." Modesty and humility, says St. Bernard, are sisters; I should rather call them mother and daughter, for it seems to me that modesty is a daughter of humility. Modesty refers primarily to the outward personal appearance, and humility to the interior. By modesty man so comports himself that he is affable and agreeable to all; modesty is apparent in dress, in walk, in the tone of voice, in aspect,

[1]St. Augustine (De Civitate Dei, lib. ix., c. v.) thus defines mercy: Est alienæ quædam in corde nostro compassio, quia, utique si possumus, subvenire compellimur.

in every outward act, in the whole personal carriage and deportment; it sheds about the person an atmosphere of benevolence, gentleness, amiability, respect, courtesy, and grace; his company is desired by all and his presence is a delight. That modesty may not be a deceptive appearance but a real solid virtue, it should come from the very depths of the soul, from humility of heart, as an aroma comes from a flower. One who knows himself and knowing himself is conscious of his abasement, watches over his acts, loves to be unknown, thinks every one better than himself, seeks the lowest place and rejoices in it, and his conscience is always tranquil and at peace. Is it to be wondered at that this interior peace should give character to his outward acts, should radiate from his countenance, and manifest itself in modesty?

"*Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.*" It would indeed seem that a Christian, such as St. Peter pictures him in the words we have briefly commented on, should be loved by all and that it would be impossible for one to offer him an affront; but such is not the case. Some men are so malignant, their hearts are so perverted, that even the most modest souls, the most pious and charitable, are the special objects of their hatred and their grossest insults; it would sometimes seem that their very virtues are an incitement and a motive to inflame the anger of the wicked and to rouse persecution against them. Was not St. Peter, who spoke these truths and practised them; were not all the apostles, and Jesus Christ Himself, pursued with the deepest malevolence and the most ferocious hatred by wicked men, and

were they not finally victims of it? Therefore St. Peter continuing, says in effect: "Even if you carry all these virtues to their highest perfection you must not be surprised if the world treats you in the same way, if it persecutes you and heaps insults upon you. This is its usual reward to the virtuous. And what are you to do? *Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing.*" In these words and in those that follow, St. Peter repeats almost literally the teaching of Jesus Christ as recorded in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew. Not only are we not to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, which is a great deal; but "*contrariwise*" we are to return "*blessing,*" words which are the exact counterpart of the precept of Christ, "*Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.*" This is certainly the highest degree of charity and heroic virtue, but Jesus Christ has commanded it, and what is more, He practised it Himself on the Cross, and this is enough for us. St. Peter goes on to say, as if anticipating a difficulty: "*For unto this you are called.*" Do not think it hard, the apostle seems to say, if the religion to which you are called imposes upon you such exalted virtues, for it is done in order "*that you may inherit a blessing.*" What is the blessing to which St. Peter here refers as a reward to be given to those who magnanimously pardon affronts and bless those who revile them? Doubtless he refers chiefly to the eternal blessing, to the reward of the just, but there may also be an allusion to a temporal blessing or reward which the world sometimes bestows on generous souls who pardon affronts and return good for evil.

After setting forth this exalted teaching on the pardon of offenses, on returning good for evil and blessing for cursing, St. Peter quotes a passage from the Psalms:[1] *"He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile,"* that is, whosoever will be happy here on earth and eternally blessed in heaven, let him in as far as that is possible to man, keep a watch upon his tongue and guard against deceiving or defrauding his neighbor. It is evident that this passage, this testimony from the Psalms, is introduced to illustrate and re-enforce the words of St. Peter concerning rendering good for evil and blessing for reviling, and that its introduction is most appropriate, inasmuch as the Letter was addressed to Christians, the bulk of whom were Hebrews who had grown up among ideas and traditions essentially Hebraic. One who can not restrain his tongue, who returns railing for railing, is not only preparing for himself evil days in the life to come, where it will be rendered to every one according to his works, but very frequently he is preparing an unhappy future for himself in this, by sowing the seeds of discord, by offending and irritating his brother, by creating enemies, and by kindling the flames of hatred; whereas he who holds his tongue, returns good for evil, and blesses when he is reviled, silences his adversary and, as St. Paul says, overcomes evil by good.

"Let him decline from evil and do good; let him seek after peace and pursue it." These words are also from the same psalm, and, as you

[1] Ps. xxxiii. 14, 15.

see, are very comprehensive, containing four distinct points, which St. Peter confirms and commends, but which I shall pass over. To turn aside from evil, to do good, to seek peace and carefully to preserve it, are very generic precepts, which it is not necessary to dwell upon, and hence I will go on to another sentence from the same psalm: "*Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers; but the countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil things.*" To have the eyes upon one or to gaze fixedly at him may mean one of two things wholly contrary to each other; it may mean that we look upon him with anger and disdain, or with love and complacency. Enemies gaze at each other with an angry, cruel, and contemptuous look; a mother looks upon the infant she carries in her arms with eyes beaming with delight and love. In what sense does the Psalmist mean that God has His eyes on the just? Evidently, as there is question of the just, His eyes are fixed upon them with solicitude and paternal affection, because they are His beloved children. To them His ears are open to hear their prayer and grant their request. How graceful and sweet is this picture in which the Psalmist represents God as looking lovingly upon the virtuous and listening favorably to their prayers. He looks tenderly upon them, He listens attentively to them, as a father, or rather, as a mother might do with her children; a mother is all intent upon the needs of her children, she gazes upon them in silence, she anticipates their wants, and scarcely has she heard a cry or a moan, when she is at their side, and for

their weal she would gladly give her life. This is but a faint image of the loving solicitude with which God encompasses the righteous and provides for their needs.

But if God is all tenderness to the just, His countenance, says the Psalmist, is full of anger and terror against the wicked to startle and frighten them and bring them back to wiser counsels.[1] It is hardly necessary to remark that here, as in a thousand other passages of Sacred Writ, God is spoken of as if He were a man, having eyes and ears and a countenance, whereas reason teaches us and we know by faith that God is a pure spirit, and as such can have none of these things, but only a mind and will, as is fitting to His most simple nature.

And here St. Peter again takes up his exhortatory tone, saying: "*And who is he that can hurt you if you be zealous for good?*" He had already told his disciples that they must not render evil for evil, but on the contrary, that they should bless those who reviled them, and to confirm them in well-doing he adds: "If you do good to all and if you turn to your own advantage the evil which the wicked attempt to do you, who can hurt you, who can do you harm? Your enemies can not; who, then, can? All things here on earth may be taken advantage of and turned to account, by the righteous and by the true sons of God, for, as St. Paul says, to them all things work together unto

[1]This verse, as is clear, is an instance of a uniform usage, especially in the Psalms, of repeating in the second half, with a slight change of words, what it said in the first. In the second part of this verse the word *countenance* is in apposition to the words *eyes* and *ears* in the first. and means the same thing.

good. The favor of men and their blessings are beneficial, and so also are their contradictions and their curses, for to the just all these furnish occasions for serving God and for the exercise of virtue.

"*But if you also suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye.*" This sentence is taken almost literally from the Sermon on the Mount, where Christ says: "*Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake;*" and again: "*Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*" "And fear them not," adds St. Peter, "and *be not troubled.*" Why hate those who hate you, who revile and persecute you? Do not they make easy for you the way to Heaven? Are they not preparing your crown? And if they take away the body, they can not take away the soul, nor, unless God permits it, harm a hair of your head. Away then with all fear, and "*be not troubled.*"[1]

The last verse of the Epistle remains to be explained: "*Sanctify the Lord Jesus Christ in your hearts.*" "Sanctify" is the word used in the Latin Vulgate and it means the same as adore, expressing precisely the same sense which the word "*hallowed*" has in the Lord's Prayer, when we say: "*Hallowed be Thy name,*" that is, may Thy name be honored, glorified, and adored. As

[1]The literal reading is: *Timorem autem eorum ne timueritis;* Be not afraid of their fear, which is an unusual and harsh expression; and means: "Let not the fear with which enemies threaten you, affright you"; or, "do not fear those who would try to frighten you."

our nature is twofold, so also must the worship we pay to God be twofold, a worship of mind and heart, or an interior worship, and a worship of the body, or an exterior worship. The exterior can not be separated from the interior, and if it is so separated it degenerates into hypocrisy or into mere material acts, utterly destitute of merit before God. The worship of the heart must precede and give life and character to exterior worship, just as the soul gives life and character to the body; and although the interior worship of the soul may at times prescind from the body and be possible without it, ordinarily it requires its agency, just as thought requires words for its expression. St. Peter in the words quoted above urges upon his disciples the necessity of this interior worship, of this adoration of the heart, the cause, the inspiration, and source of all exterior worship.

My friends, Jesus Christ in speaking to the Samaritan woman said that God is a spirit, and hence men must above all worship Him in spirit. When, as in duty bound, we set about to worship God, let us place ourselves before His infinite majesty, collect our thoughts, control our affections, withdraw into the sanctuary of our mind and heart, and there recognize and avow our own nothingness and God's greatness; this knowledge, this intimate and deep persuasion that we are nothing and that God is everything, while it will force us to bow our whole being at the sight of so much greatness and, as it were, utterly to obliterate ourselves, will also inspire us, as if by natural instinct, to bend the knee, to bow the head,

and to cry out in the words of St. Thomas: "*My Lord and my God.*" It is then we worship, then we adore, then "*we sanctify the Lord Jesus in our hearts.*" And this is to worship God in spirit and in truth.

HOMILY XII

AT THAT *time Jesus said to His disciples:* I tell you, unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you: that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee: Leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.—GOSPEL, *Matt.* v. 20-24.

THE Gospels are a brief record of the principal facts in the life of Jesus Christ and an exposition of His teaching, which is set forth in the form of parables, or in discourses at once simple and energetic. Of all the discourses of Jesus Christ, that known as the Sermon on the Mount is the most important. It is so called because it was delivered on a mountain; it begins with the fifth chapter of St. Matthew and ends with the seventh.

In going from Nazareth to Tiberias, after passing Thabor on the right and crossing the high undulating table-land, a small hill, destitute of all vegetation, may be seen rising on the left, called the *Hill of the Beatitudes,* which, tradition says, is that on which Jesus Christ delivered the *Sermon on the Mount,* beginning with the *Beatitudes.* This sermon is a brief exposition of the moral teaching of Jesus Christ, so clear, simple, and strong that it has ever been, and ever will be until time is no more, a marvel to every one who reads it attentively.

The Gospel just read to you, and which is to be the subject of this homily, is taken from the Sermon on the Mount.[1]

"Jesus said to His disciples: Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."[2] In order to understand these words of Our Lord it is necessary to know what was the justice, or the virtue, or the observance of the Law of the Scribes and Pharisees. They professed rigorously to observe the Mosaic Law, to which they had added many practices and prescriptions. These, while great importance was attached to them, were of no value whatever; they were such as to wash the hands before eating, to cleanse certain vessels, and the like. These prac-

[1]Some interpreters think, and this opinion is worthy of respect, that all the sentences found in this Sermon were not uttered consecutively on the mountain, and that some, taken from discourses spoken by Christ on other occasions, were inserted in it.

[2]The expression of the Gospel, *"if your justice does not abound more than that of the Pharisees,"* is thoroughly Hebraic. It is well known that the Hebrews had no *comparative* and hence they were obliged to use a circumlocution, like the above.

tices were not condemned by Jesus Christ, and much less was the exact observance of the Law condemned; but what He did censure in the Scribes and Pharisees was the fact that, while they ascribed great virtue to the material fulfilling of the Law and rigorously insisted on the observance of trifles of no possible moment, they wholly neglected the interior and the true spirit of the Law. Jesus healed a sick man on the Sabbath and the Scribes and Pharisees at once accused Him of violating the Law of Moses, making the Sabbath a day of rest. The apostles plucked some ears of corn on the Sabbath to appease the hunger that consumed them, and at once these ferocious fanatics called them profaners of the Law. In a word, they were unfeeling, uncharitable, wholly intent upon discharging the external, material practices of religion and wholly neglecting the interior. Jesus Christ denounced such virtue as this as unavailing to bring men to heaven; He said that besides these external acts, prior to them, and more than they, internal acts were demanded and that the sacrifice of the heart was more imperative than any external ceremonial of worship. The characteristic of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is this, that it is a renewal of the spirit; that it is a new birth within; that it is a purifying of the heart; that it demands true charity, a charity that goes out in works; and all this was precisely the reverse of what the Pharisees did, to whom Jesus indignantly said: "*First make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean.*"[1]

[1]Matt. xxiii. 26.

When Jesus says that our justice must be superior to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, He means that we shall look after the interior rather than the exterior; that the worship of the spirit and of the heart is far better than external practices and ceremonies; that charity is far preferable to what may be called material formalism; in a word, that the spirit, dwelling in man, is his chiefest ornament and supremest glory.

Now, my friends, are not some Christians tainted with a suggestion of the leprosy of the Scribes and Pharisees? We pray God that such is not the case, but it would not be surprising if it were. The pharisaical justice held up to scorn by Our Lord, is to say long prayers, to be assiduous in religious practices that are not obligatory, to make pilgrimages and novenas and triduums, to belong to a number of pious confraternities, and all the while to be blasting the reputation of others, to be sowing discord among friends, to be exacting excessive usury from the poor, to engage in obscene conversations, to be heaping filth upon the soul through an illicit intimacy, to refuse a crust of bread or the price of it to a famishing beggar. There is also a flavor of pharisaical justice about the conduct of those Christians who would consider themselves culpable if they omitted to say their Rosary, or to go to Mass on week days, or to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and who, with all this show of piety, will go home and play the tyrant with their wives and children, their sisters and servants. Bear well in mind, my friends, that while all religious practices are excellent, neither they, nor even the sac-

raments, are to be regarded as ends, but as means; and hence, it may happen that one may abound and superabound in these things and be wanting in true virtue; and that, on the contrary, another may be extremely virtuous and yet only do what is barely necessary as regards the practices of religion and the use of the sacraments. Let us, then, seek to recognize real solid virtue, virtue that is nurtured on sacrifice and works of charity, the virtue that Christ desires to see in His followers, for this alone will open the gates of heaven.

Christ, after saying generally that the virtue required in His followers must be superior to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, goes on to give instances in point, saying: *"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment."*

The Old Law directly forbade the killing of another, and, in so doing, forbade all external acts against his person, for which, if committed, it inflicted a proportional punishment; but the New Law, says Christ, which I promulgate and impose, goes farther and forbids, not only all external acts of violence against the person of another, but also all anger, rancor, and hatred of whatever kind or degree.

Homicide, in the Old Law, was subject to the judgment and one found guilty of deliberately committing it was punished with death; that Law took cognizance only of external acts; the Gospel, on the contrary, enters into the deepest recesses

of the conscience and declares that he who in his soul harbors hatred and anger against his neighbor, incurs the divine judgment and merits eternal punishment.

It would be unjust to Moses, to the prophets, and to the teaching of the ancient Synagogue simply to affirm that the Old Law was limited to external acts and took no heed of internal dispositions. When David cried out with tears in his voice: *"Create a clean heart within me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels;"* and again: *"For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it; with burnt offerings Thou wilt not be delighted. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise;"* he expressed with wonderful vividness and energy the fact that what God wants above all else is a worship of the spirit and a sacrifice of the heart. But it is also true that this exalted doctrine was little known and practised in Israel and that it was Jesus Christ who carried it to its perfection and made it common and popular in His Church.

Are we to hold, then, that it is sinful to be indignant at the sight of crime, or that it is sinful to punish criminals, or to demand that they shall be punished? We must distinguish, my friends. If we hate the guilty personally and if our motive for bringing them to punishment is a vulgar spirit of revenge, then we incur the punishment fulminated by Christ, that *"whosoever is angry with his brother is guilty of the judgment."* But if we are indignant because a crime has been committed, or because God has been offended, or be-

cause of a zeal to repress scandal, because we desire the punishment of the guilty in order that they may amend their lives and that others may be deterred from sin, then our anger is not blameworthy; it is commendable and a holy anger, as was that of Jesus Christ, mentioned in the Gospel: "*And looking round about on them with anger,*"[1] that is, on the Scribes and Pharisees, who resisted the truth.

Jesus goes on still pointing out the superiority of the Law of the Gospel to that of Moses: "*And whosoever shall say to his brother: Raca,*[2] *shall be in danger of the Council.*" The word *Raca* means *stupid* or *without brains,* and the Council here means the Sanhedrim, or the High Court of the Jews, whose province it was to hear and pass judgment on the highest crimes. Jesus continues: "*And whosoever shall say: Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire,*" that is, of the severest punishment. In order to get at the true meaning of this sentence of Christ a few words of explanation are here necessary.

We should always bear in mind that Jesus Christ was speaking to Hebrews and that He accommodated His language to their usages and in a

[1]Sciendum est quod alia est ira, quam impatientia excitat; alia, quam zelus justitiæ format. Illa ex vitio, hæc ex virtute generatur.—St. Gregory, M. in Tob. v. ii.

[2]Some say that *Raca* is a Hebrew word, others that it is Greek. According to the former it would mean *fit to be spit upon,* according to the latter it would mean an *impious* person, also a *blockhead,* a *dolt.* It implies something less than a madman or lunatic, because in the text there is a gradual ascent from less to greater; first, comes *interior* anger; next, anger that manifests itself exteriorly in insulting words; and lastly, an epithet superlatively offensive, namely *madman* or lunatic; and as is the offense so also is the penalty.

measure to their ideas. Now, among the Jews there were three kinds of tribunals or courts; the first took cognizance of pecuniary causes and was composed of three judges; the second had jurisdiction over graver causes, such as homicide, and had a bench of twenty-three judges; the third tried and passed sentence in the gravest causes, such as idolatry and apostasy, and this court, called the Sanhedrim or Great Council, was composed of seventy-two judges. Jesus Christ here notes three degrees of guilt; first, anger against one's brother; next, calling another *Raca,* or stupid; and third, the still graver offense of branding another as a *fool;* and He says that each of these transgressions shall be judged in its proper court and a proportionate punishment inflicted on those guilty of them, and to make His meaning more clear He illustrates it by comparing the three grades of guilt with the three Jewish tribunals, having jurisdiction over three different kinds of legal causes. The punishment which Jesus says is inflicted on the three transgressions named, is without doubt an eternal punishment, but differing in each case according to the gravity of the offense; and since, as is clear from the text, the maximum punishment is inflicted on the third offense, it must be inferred that in each of the three grades of guilt there is a grave violation of fraternal charity.[1]

[1]It may seem to some that the doctrine, which holds that to treat one's neighbor with scorn and contempt, and to call him a *fool,* or a *lunatic,* is a mortal sin and merits eternal punishment, is excessively rigorous. The gravity of a sin is measured by the rank of the person offended and of him who gives the offense, by the offense given, by the circumstances, and finally by the intention of the offender. Now, while the sins referred to in the

Jesus Christ in the above passage speaks of the fire of *gehenna,* "*he shall be in danger of the fire of gehenna,*" an expression which, all interpreters agree, means the fire of hell. What is this *gehenna?* What is the meaning of this word, which we find in this passage of the Gospel, in the Apocalypse, in Jeremias, and in Isaias? In order to get at its meaning it will be necessary to go a little into history.

On the southern side of the city of Jerusalem, at the foot of Mount Sion, there is a small valley called *Gehenna.* In this valley the Hebrews, who had fallen into idolatry, "*were made to pass through the fire,*" that is, they sometimes offered their sons to Moloch, the god of the Phenecians or Cananeans, by burning them; and to drown the agonizing shrieks of these unfortunate victims they made a deafening noise with timbrels, and hence the valley was called *Topheth,* or the valley of the timbrel. King Josias abolished this monstrous and incredible barbarity, and in order to make the place more execrable and infamous, he ordered that all the garbage and filth of the city should be dumped there and that all the bodies of those executed should be cast into it, and to prevent poisonous exhalations from arising and creating a pestilence, he directed that great fires should be kept almost constantly burning to consume all this refuse. In speaking to the Hebrews of the pains of hell Our Lord drew an image of

Gospel may, *per se,* sometimes be only venial, it can not be denied that they may also be grave. Here certainly it is to be taken for granted that they are grave.

[1]*Ehe* signifies valley; *Hennon* was the name of the owner of the valley; these two words combined make *Gehenna* or *Ghinnon.*

it from this infamous valley and from the fire that was nearly always burning there, and called hell itself Gehenna.

From these words of Christ we may learn how great an evil it is to nourish hatred against our brother, and how much greater an evil it is to give vent to this hatred outwardly in abusive language, offensive and insulting to him against whom it is directed. And such trespasses are not only frequent among us, but, what is more, they are made light of and are rarely if ever confessed. My friends, it is always a serious matter to wound fraternal charity, the charity which Jesus Christ earnestly insisted on and which He declared was *His* precept, a *new* precept, the token by which His disciples should be known and distinguished.

Wishing to bring out still more prominently the difference between the Law of Moses and the justice of the Pharisees on the one hand and the Law of the Gospel on the other, Jesus added some words of gravest import which we all should seriously ponder: "*If therefore thou bring thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift.*" It would seem that the Scribes and Pharisees taught that a violation of the precepts: "Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not insult thy neighbor," might be expiated by an offering made through their priests to God; this teaching Jesus rejected and plainly stated what such offenders must do and do at once. And here we should not pass over a point that ought to be

attentively considered, namely, that in giving this precept Jesus Christ does not distinguish between him who gives the offense and him who receives it; He insists that both shall hasten to make peace, the one with the other. True, the offender is bound in justice to give satisfaction to the one offended; that is required by justice; but Our Lord makes no distinction; He lays down as a general principle that it is necessary at once to renew the bond of fraternal charity. Although the one offended is not, as is the offender, bound in justice to make the first advances toward re-establishing peace, nevertheless, if he does so, the act will be a holy one and pleasing to God.

Here is a man at the foot of the altar who presents to the priest a victim to be offered to God in thanksgiving for favors received and in expiation for faults committed; his conscience, says Jesus Christ, in that instant reminds him that his brother entertains a feeling of vindictiveness against him. What is he to do? Should he continue his devotions, offer his sacrifice, and put off to some other time his reconciliation with his brother? To us it might seem that this would be the proper thing to do. He is there in the Temple, his offering is ready, the priest has received it, and why now interrupt the sacrifice? Why leave God for man? Why make a disturbance and interfere with divine worship? Peace may be restored at some more convenient time; there is no need of a precipitate reconciliation. First complete the sacrifice to God, and then renew peace with our neighbor. This is the way we would reason, but not so did Jesus Christ reason. He

says: "Leave thy offering there at the altar; yes, interrupt the sacrifice; go, run, hasten, fly to thy brother, make peace with him, and then come, take up again thy gift and complete the sacrifice, and it will be acceptable to God. And why, my friends? Because this is the teaching both of reason and of faith. Because to make an offering in the Temple and a sacrifice to God is indeed a matter of counsel, but to live in charity with our brother is a matter of divine precept. Because as long as we entertain ill-will against our brother God is angry with us. Because a sacrifice is a symbol of peace, and can God be pleased with the offering of a symbol of peace, when peace itself has not yet dawned in our heart? Because, finally, peace and concord among brothers are more pleasing to God than victims and sacrifices. God wants not our possessions, but ourselves, and, more than all, the sacrifice of our mind through faith and of our heart through love. It is charity that informs the heart and makes our sacrifice acceptable; it is not the sacrifice that sanctifies the heart and makes it acceptable to God.[1] The worth of the gift is measured by the goodness, the generosity, and the purity of the heart, and where these are lacking, even among men, the gift is spurned, and how much more so with God, who searches the

[1] "Quid est ad pacem Dei accedere sine pace? Ad remissionem debitorum cum retentione? Quomodo placabit Patrem iratus in fratrem?"—TERTULLIAN, De Oratione, n. x.

"Te quærit Dominus magis quam munus: offer munus tuum et tu non es munus Dei. Plus quærit Christus quem redemit sanguine suo quam quod invenisti in horreo tuo."—ST. AUGUSTINE, De Verb. Dom., Ser. xvi.

How beautiful and simple are these observations of Tertullian and St. Augustine!

heart, by which alone He is honored? How can a sacrifice of peace be made to God when there is no peace in the heart? How can we ask God to pardon us our sins when we refuse, with His eyes upon us, to pardon the faults of our brother? How can we ask God to be forgiving toward us when we are implacable toward our brother? No, our sacrifice can not be acceptable to God until we first offer Him the incomparably more worthy and more noble sacrifice of our heart by pardoning our brother and being sincerely reconciled to him. Having done this, as Jesus Christ assures us, our sacrifice will be accepted and it will go up to heaven as an odor of sweetness.

Of this precept of Christ, so luminously expressed and with such vivid imagery, we have a memorial and a most beautiful symbol in the ancient liturgy, which has been partly preserved even down to our own time. We know that the early Christians, before receiving holy communion, gave one another the kiss of peace, to show that the most perfect charity reigned among them; and of this usage we have a memorial in the rite at solemn Mass, when the sacred ministers give one another the embrace of peace. It must be confessed that of some most beautiful rites, full of deepest significance, formerly in use in the Church, there seems now to remain only the material forms; the spirit is gone.

My dear friends and brothers, let us here and now, kneeling before the altar, on which in a little while the Victim of peace and forgiveness will be immolated, turn our eyes in upon our own hearts, known only to God. Let us with the light of

conscience and of faith search their inmost recesses, and if perchance we find that there lurks there resentment, or rancor, or grudge against our brothers, let us not inquire whether we are the offended or the offenders, for that matters little; and if we find that we do not love all equally well, or that we do not forgive offenses received, or that we have not yet asked pardon of those whom we have offended, and have not made reparation, or that we still cherish a bitter memory of affronts and insults and long even remotely for an opportunity to be avenged, or that we do not rejoice at our brother's good fortune as if it were our own, or, in a word, that charity does not reign supreme in our hearts, then, before offering the divine sacrifice of the Mass, let us generously resolve to make peace with our brother, whoever he may be, and we can be sure that this act will be more pleasing to God and more meritorious for ourselves than the observance of the precept, in obedience to which we are gathered here today. If we wish to have our own sins forgiven, we must forgive those who have sinned against us. If we wish to be at peace with God, we must be at peace with our brothers. With the measure wherewith we mete unto others will God mete unto us.

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Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XIII

BRETHREN: All we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death. For we are buried together with Him by Baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ: knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him. For in that He died to sin, He died once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. So do you, also, reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* vi. 3-11.

INTERPRETERS unanimously agree that of the fourteen Letters of St. Paul, that addressed to the Romans is the most important and the most difficult to understand, because in it the great apostle treats at length of vocation to the Faith, of divine grace, of the fact that it is a free gift, of the newness of life wrought in Baptism, of original sin, and of other principal points of

Christian doctrine. The passage that I have read is found in the sixth chapter of this Letter to the Romans. It speaks of the duty of baptized Christians to die to sin and live to Christ, and in this is summed up all the practical wisdom of the Gospel. It is a subject of the highest importance, but one not easy to explain, owing to the concise and compact style of the Apostle. Your attention will facilitate my labor in explaining those words just read and aid you the better to comprehend their sense and derive profit from them.

"*All who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death.*" The most important point in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and one which St. Paul elucidates in a thousand ways, is this, that we are reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ, and that this faith is a free gift, to which we had no right or claim whatever on any score; and the munificence of the gift will appear incomparably greater if we consider that we were all, Jew and Gentile, when it came to us, in a state of universal guilt. Now we are baptized, that is, we have passed from a state of death to a state of life, and all this through Jesus Christ. But what is the meaning of the phrase of St. Paul: "*We are baptized in the death of Jesus Christ?*" We know that in the time of the apostles and after and even down to the days of St. Thomas, Baptism was nearly always administered by immersion; the whole person, even the head, was put under water; in this act or rite the one baptized represented the death or the burial of Christ, as in the act or rite of coming out from the water he represented

His resurrection. Christ, dying on the cross, ceased to live a temporal life; so also the one baptized on coming out from the water ceases to live his old life, his life of sin, to which he had been a slave. Christ rising from the grave lives again, but with a new and immortal life; so also the one baptized on coming out from the water ought to enter upon a new life, a life holy and spiritual. As Christ, so to say, left in the sepulcher His passible and mortal life, so does he who is baptized leave in the waters of Baptism sin and all the works of sin.

This thought is more fully developed in the following verse: *"For we are buried together with Him by Baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in the newness of life."* What is a Christian? asks Tertullian. And his reply is a bold one, but true and incisive: *"He is another Christ,"* a faithful copy of Christ in everything. Whatever took place in Christ, says St. Augustine, ought, all things considered, to take place in His true disciples. On the cross Christ died to the natural life of the body; in Baptism we should die to sin, to the passions, to the unlawful pleasures of the flesh, that is, we should be, as regards all these things, as one dead, neither caring for them, nor looking upon them, nor loving them. Christ rose again, radiant with immortal youth; we should come up out of the waters of Baptism new-made, born anew; in thought and word and deed, new men, new creations, and walk in the new way of virtue and holiness. Christ rose again and by rising proved the sanctity of

His doctrine and made manifest His own glory and the glory of the Father, who sent Him; so also should we, new-born in Baptism, by our lives, modeled on that of Christ, be witnesses to the holiness of the doctrine we profess and give glory to God,[1] so that, as Jesus Christ elsewhere says, men seeing our good works, our new works, the fruit of our faith, may come to a knowledge of Him, whose disciples we are, and glorify our Father in heaven. Or more briefly and possibly more clearly, once we are baptized (St. Paul is speaking to adults), sin and the old life, the life of the slavery to the passions, should cease in us and we should enter upon a life of grace, the new life, the life of Christ.

God grant that these manly thoughts may penetrate into our souls and be the inspirations of our lives! Believe me, my friends, there is great need of this among all classes of people. True Christian life and conduct does not consist in words, in protestations, in external practices, in novenas and triduums and processions, in the lighting of candles, in feasts and noisy pilgrimages, but in the works of the Christian life and in the imitation of Christ, the everlasting model of every perfection. All those external practices are good and doubtless to be commended, but they are means, and not the end, and they are to be used in as far as they lead us on to our end, that is, to the practice of the

[1]Quidquid gestum est in cruce Christi, in sepultura, in resurrectione tertia die, in ascensione in cœlum, et sede ad dexteram Patris, ita gestum est, ut iis rebus non tantum mystice dictis, sed etiam gestis configuratur vita christiana, quæ leve geritur," etc., and the saint goes on to develop and prove his statement. (Encherid, c. liii, apud À Lapide.)

Christian virtues. If the life of Jesus Christ is not reproduced in us, if the virtues of Jesus Christ are not resplendent in us, all these religious practices will be to no purpose; they will be a manifest contradiction, and in a sense our condemnation. I insist on this great truth because I am persuaded there is much need of it.

St. Paul enforces the same truth in the following verse: *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."* The scope of the Apostle is always to set forth that intimate union which exists between Christ and the new-born soul, that identity of life which is our glory and which the divine Master so admirably describes in His discourse at the Last Supper: *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him the same beareth fruit, for without Me you can do nothing."* As if He had said: "I am the vine, you are the branches; as the branch can not bear fruit unless it remains united with the vine, so neither can you unless you remain united with Me." Note, says St. Paul, what takes place in a tree; if into one tree grafts from another are inserted, these shoots draw the sap from the tree into which they are grafted, they live from it, they grow strong with its strength and form but one tree with it; so also should it be with us, who are shoots grafted into the tree of divine life, Jesus Christ. Being grafted into Him in holy Baptism, we are like Him in everything; we live of Him and in Him and we bear the same fruit He bears. What is the result? Being dead through Baptism to the

old tree from which we were cut, that is, to the old man, to Adam the sinner, and being grafted into the new tree, that is, into Jesus Christ, we shall live with Christ and rise with Him: *"If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."*[1] In winter the tree is stripped of the glory of its leaves and both the tree and its branches seem dead; in the springtime the air grows warm, the rays of the sun diffuse their heat, the tree awakes from its seeming death and fills the branches with new life; both tree and branches live again and are once more clad in leaves and brilliant with flowers. So will it be with us, my friends, if we are grafted into the tree of the true vine, Christ Jesus; as He has already risen, so shall we also rise and live with Him everlastingly. Beautiful and comforting are these words of the Apostle![2] Being grafted into Christ let us rise first to a life of grace and by grace we shall have in us the blessed seed of the resurrection even of the body: *"We shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."*

The Apostle is wholly intent upon making the Romans understand the mystery of our death through Baptism and of our consequent resurrection, and hence he returns to the subject in the

[1]The Letters of St. Paul, as was natural and as all interpreters note, are replete with Hebraisms, and certainly this very intricate passage is one of them: *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."* A better translation of which would seem to be this: "If we are really engrafted in the likeness of His death," etc.

[2]Some think the resurrection, of which St. Paul speaks, is the resurrection of the soul through grace; others think it is the final resurrection of the body, since the future, *we shall be*, is used. I think the one implies the other.

following verses: "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him (Christ), that the body of sin may be destroyed.*" You know, he seems to say, that through Baptism we are dead to sin, that we are grafted into Christ and that we ought to live a new life, the very life of Christ, and knowing all this, you should also know that our old man is crucified with Christ. And who is this old man of whom the Apostle speaks here and elsewhere? I have spoken on this subject before, but it may not be amiss to repeat here what I then said. An old man is one who is useless; the term is found only in St. Paul, and is used in opposition to the term *new* man, or man renewed by Jesus Christ. The *new man* was man as he first came forth from the hands of God, as we say that a house is new that has just been completed. The *old man* is the man who comes later, who is wasted by age and other causes, as a house in need of repair is said to be old. Adam in his innocence was the new man, Adam the sinner was the old man, and so also is every sinner descended from him with the taint of original sin and with other added sins. Here "old man" means every man infected with original sin, the slave of his passions and of the vices he has contracted. Now, St. Paul says, bear well in mind that this corrupted man was nailed to the cross with Christ; that is, he was slain with Christ in Baptism, and he ought daily to be slain through the grace of Christ, since we should daily combat him by crucifying, and, if possible, murdering all our perverse desires. What should the true disciple of Christ do every day? He should make war on and subdue his passions,

and this is what is meant by crucifying the old man. As Christ nailed His body to the cross, so ought we to nail our passions to the cross. This is in a phrase the whole wisdom of Christ and the teaching of the Gospel. And if we do this what will be the result? The body of sin will be destroyed: *"That the body of sin may be destroyed."* This body of sin, of which St. Paul speaks, may mean the whole accumulated weight of the sin with which we are burdened, or better still, the body itself, in as much as it is the lurking-place of concupiscence, the root of all sin, and in this sense, the instrument of sin and an incentive to it.

Is it meant that the body itself shall be destroyed? No, by no means, for St. Paul says in another place that as the body has yielded its members to serve iniquity, so must it serve justice unto sanctification. It is said that the body of sin must be destroyed in as much as the body, being an instrument of sin, must be loosed from that servitude and become an instrument of virtue; or as Tertullian wisely puts it: *"The offending body must be made harmless by amendment of life, but not by destroying it outright."*[1] Once we have crucified the old man, or what is the same thing, destroyed the body of sin, we shall no longer serve sin: *"To the end that we may serve sin no longer."* The greatest of Pagan philosophers has said that our body is like a race-horse that obeys its rider and goes whither he directs it. If our soul is regenerated by Christ and animated by grace the body obeys it and does the works of life; on the contrary, if the soul is under the dominion

[1]De Resurr. Carnis, c. xlvii, apud À Lapide.

of the passions and is the slave of sin, the body does the works of sin.

And here the Apostle sums up in one strong, vivid sentence all that has been said in the foregoing verses: "*For he that is dead is justified* (loosed) *from sin.*" In giving our name to Christ in Baptism and being grafted into Him, we have nothing more to do with sin; in the presence of sin we are as dead men in regard to the things about them, which to them are as if they were not. Or to use the other figure of St. Paul, we are as shoots cut from one tree to be grafted into another, the tree of life, or Jesus Christ. As regards the tree from which they were cuts, these shoots are absolutely dead and can not possibly produce any fruit from it; but being grafted into another tree they can live and bear fruit, but they live and produce, not of themselves, but of the new tree. So also with us; after Baptism we must no longer live the life of Adam, or of the man of sin, and do his works, but we must live the life of Christ, and do the works of Christ. Let these profound and energetic words of the Apostle remain deeply impressed upon our minds.

New-born in Christ and living of His life we should be dead to the world and to its pleasures; between us and it there should be no intercourse; it should be dead to us and we to it. Does the twig that is grafted into a tree and lives of it and in it, seek to separate itself from it and go back to the tree from which it was cut? Assuredly not, and if it should it would only wither up and die. This is the teaching of the Apostle, the sap of the

Gospel; now that we belong to Jesus Christ through Baptism, we must be as dead to a disorderly love of the world and of the things of the world. This is our simple duty. Are we so in fact? Alas, how far are we from the sublime *ideal* of a true Christian, traced by St. Paul. Our thoughts and affections are constantly fixed on the things of earth; we love them, we long for them, we live for them; they are our joy and the one object of our lives; and we, Christians as we are, rarely if ever give a thought to Jesus Christ and the things of heaven. We are continually caressing the body and striving to gratify its baser passions, forgetting all the while, or not wishing to remember, that it is our duty to subdue the body, to crucify it and make it die to sin. And yet to do this is the calling and the business of a Christian, and if we do not do it, we are Christians only in name.

"*Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ.*" This is a natural conclusion from what has been said; if we are imitators of Christ in making the body die to the pleasures of the earth, we shall live together with Christ in the life to come. As you see, the Apostle, while placing before us the sacrifices that must be made if we would practise virtue and be followers of Christ, also reminds us of the reward and of the crown that are laid up for us, and these too, like everything else, he associates with the name of Christ.

"*Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him.*" This verse is to be con-

nected with the preceding, and means that we shall live together with Christ. But for how long? Forever; because Christ being risen and having overcome death, can not again fall under its dominion.

He goes on still further to develop this thought: "*For in that He died to sin, He dieth once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.*" Christ died only once for sin, He died once for all; so also we having died once to sin, having once renounced the world and its works, we ought to be dead to them forever, and, having once renounced the world, there should be no need of renewing that renunciation; and as Christ rose once and rose for good and will live a life of glory, so also we, having risen to God by grace and living in Christ, ought always to live in Him, and never again by a return to sin fall under the dominion of death.

The last verse of the Epistle is this: "*So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*" After having explained the doctrine of the Gospel, both theoretically and practically, in a general way, the Apostle addresses himself particularly to the faithful to whom he is writing, saying in effect: "Now, my dearest children, apply to yourselves the teaching I have given you. Try in as far as you can to be always dead to sin and to live only to God in imitation of Jesus Christ, or possibly better still, with the aid of Jesus Christ, our Lord.[1]

[1]The particle *in* before the name of Christ, so frequently to be met with in the Letters of St. Paul, has various significations, as

St. Paul, in the Epistle just explained, represents in poetical language and imagery virtue and vice as two living beings at war with each other, each contending against the other for the mastery or possession of the human heart. The human heart is between the two contestants, perfectly free to surrender itself either to one or the other. If it takes the side of vice, it becomes the slave of the passions which war against the spirit; it lives the life of the body and is lost to God forever; if on the contrary it takes the side of virtue, of sanctity, and of Christ, it becomes a child of God, it dies to the world and will live forever with Christ. The choice is inevitable; and thus man has the making of his own destiny, either to be eternally miserable with sin or to be eternally happy with virtue in Christ. There is no middle course; a choice must be made of one or the other. To which of the two, asking to be admitted into our heart, will we give the keys? To sin or to virtue? To the world or to Christ? To him who offers us pleasure in this life and eternal death in the next; or to Him who in return for a passing sorrow here, promises life eternal hereafter? You can not hesitate an instant in making a choice; you will take your stand under the banner of virtue, the banner of Jesus Christ, because with Him alone is life.

may be inferred from the context; the most common are these two: *In Christo*, that is, after the pattern of Christ, in imitation of Christ; *In Christo*, that is, by the *strength*, by the *grace*, by the *virtue*, by the *power*, or *authority* of Christ.

HOMILY XIV[1]

At that time: When there was a great multitude, and had nothing to eat, calling His disciples together, He saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude; for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; for some of them came from afar off. And His disciples answered Him: From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And He asked them: How many loaves have ye? who said: Seven. And He commanded the multitude to sit down upon the ground. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke, and gave to His disciples for to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away.—Gospel, *Mark* viii. 1-9.

Jesus Christ twice wrought the miracle of the multiplication of loaves, both times on the shore of the Lake of Genesareth, and nearly at

[1]I had intended to omit this homily, because the miracle here recorded of the multiplication of the loaves, with a few differences, is like that explained on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. But since this miracle is not the same and since the omission of this homily might seem strange, on reflection I have thought it better to give it, although the practical observations, at least in part, will not differ from those given in homily viii, vol. ii.

the same place. The first time He multiplied five barley loaves and two fishes, feeding about five thousand persons, not counting women and children, and this miracle is narrated in the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew, in the fourth of St. Mark, in the ninth of St. Luke, and in the fourth of St. John. St. John, who nearly always omits whatever has been recorded by the other Evangelists, records this one, omitted by them, as an introduction to the eucharistic promise, which immediately follows it. The second miracle was performed shortly after the first and is recorded in the fifteenth chapter of St. Matthew and in the eighth of St. Mark, from whose Gospel that of to-day is taken.

Some think that the two miracles of the multiplication of the loaves are one and the same. This is evidently an error, because in that case St. Matthew and St. Mark would have recorded the same miracle twice, and with circumstances wholly different, which would be impossible.

Moreover, the details of the second multiplication, as given by St. Matthew and St. Mark, can not be reconciled with those of the first described by St. Luke and St. John. In the latter it is said that five loaves and two fishes were multiplied and that twelve baskets of fragments were gathered up; in the former it is said that seven loaves and seven small fishes were multiplied and that there were seven baskets of fragments. There can be no question but that this miracle was distinct from the other and that it was performed some months later, as may be easily shown by comparing the Gospels with one another. Having

said this much by way of introduction I shall now go on, not to interpret the text, which is quite clear and needs no interpretation, but to make some moral applications which it suggests, and I beg you to follow me.

Jesus, accompanied by His disciples, had been on the confines of Phenicia, near Tyre and Sidon, whence, crossing Galilee, He returned to the shores of His beloved Lake Tiberias or Genesareth. There was with Him a great multitude that had been following Him for three days, attracted by His miracles and entranced by His words. Jesus, gazing upon this multitude that had so loyally followed Him and knowing that they had nothing to eat, calling His disciples together, said to them: *"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have been now with Me three days and have nothing to eat."* We of the West can hardly form a correct idea of the customs of the Orientals; to us it seems strange and almost incredible that so great a multitude of men, women, and children, should, in following the divine Master, go so far away from their homes and stay with Him three days; but if we consider that the climate in those countries is so mild that during the greater part of the year the people may pass the night in the open air, and that the same habits to some extent still exist in those Eastern lands, we shall have no difficulty in understanding what is related of the crowds that followed Christ. When we recollect that among the Hebrew people the religious sentiment was profound and all powerful, that they were in a fever of excited expectation concerning the coming of the Messias,

that their nomadic habits were not yet forgotten, that they had been powerfully roused by the preaching of John, and that they had been listening to Jesus with transports of delight and witnessing His stupendous miracles, when we recollect all this, it will not seem surprising that the people came out in throngs and in their enthusiasm followed Jesus wherever He went. From the great pilgrimages which take place in our own day we can form a faint idea of what then took place about the person of Jesus. The people of course brought something to eat with them, but this was entirely consumed when Jesus called His disciples to Him and in accents of ineffable tenderness said: "*I have compassion on the multitude.*" And why was Jesus so lovingly compassionate toward the crowds that followed Him? He gives four very simple reasons: "Because they have been with Me three days; because they have nothing to eat; because if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and because some of them came from afar off." How simple and natural is this language! How benevolent and tenderly affecting! We are lost in admiration, the mind is bewildered, words are inadequate to give vent to our thoughts and feelings, and we seek refuge in faith, when we realize that He who is speaking thus to the apostles and speaking in behalf of a suffering multitude, is the Son of God, the Creator of the universe and the Saviour of the world.

What lessons should we learn from Jesus? What does this multitude teach us, this multitude which in its enthusiasm to hear Jesus forgets the

hardship of travel and even the natural cravings of hunger? We who exercise any sort of authority should learn from Jesus to be gentle and affable and kind, to be forbearing and indulgent to those who are subject to us, to the suffering, the weak, and the poor. There is no sight on earth more beautiful and touching than that of authority bowing down to the suffering and lowly, loving them, succoring them, and treating them as equals. In doing so authority is not abased, it is exalted; it increases rather than loses dignity; it makes itself loved rather than feared and respected. See Jesus there in the midst of His apostles, poor, rough, uncultured fishermen. He converses with them, asks them questions, consults them, and as they gather about Him He opens His heart, as a father to his children; He tells them all His own compassionate heart feels at seeing that famishing multitude, which has journeyed so far to be with Him: *"I have compassion on the multitude."* In these words, so simple and so affectionate, we can almost feel the throbbings of the heart of Jesus.

The people who followed Jesus so continuously and at such inconvenience to themselves teach us many things. First of all they teach us that it is not the rich, the great, and the learned who follow Jesus Christ; it is doubtful if there were any such in that throng; they love their ease and comfort, and they disdain the thought of becoming learners and followers; they are puffed up with pride, which clouds their minds and prevents them from seeing the truth that finds a ready entrance into the minds of the lowly and the humble, and, as it

was about the person of Christ, so is it now in His Church.

Next, the crowds that followed Jesus along the shores of the lake and out into the desert places, teach us that we should be solicitous about going to church to hear His doctrine from the mouth of His ministers. What a contrast between those good people and us! In order to hear the words of the divine Master they were obliged to leave their homes, to desert their fields, to journey a long distance, to expose themselves to the inclemency of the weather, and to pass the night without a roof to cover them; whereas we have Jesus within a few steps from our home, it costs us not the least inconvenience to hear Him, and yet frequently for the most trifling excuse, and often without any excuse at all, we neglect to do so, or to visit Him in His Church, or to assist at Holy Mass. What a shame is this and what a self-condemnation!

Finally, this multitude teaches us that those who follow Jesus Christ receive a great reward. Not only did they hear the heavenly truths, that are the food of the soul, from His own mouth, but they also had the great privilege of witnessing a much-applauded miracle and of receiving from Him the bread that nourishes the body. St. Jerome says that the kind-hearted Jesus, after healing the many sick who were brought to Him, and teaching the multitude, deigned to perform a miracle to feed the sound.[1]

To the apostles about Him Jesus said that He pitied the people and that He could not find it in

[1] In hunc locum, apud À Lapide.

His heart to send them away hungry to their homes. It was equivalent to saying to them that He must in some way provide for their needs, and surely a way was not wanting to His omnipotence. A little while before, along the shores of that same lake, He had multiplied five loaves and two fishes, and the apostles surely had not forgotten that miracle, which so filled the crowds with amazement that they wanted to take Him by force and acclaim Him their king. It would seem that on hearing those words the apostles should have promptly answered: "Master, Thou canst do anything; only a little while ago Thou didst miraculously feed a great multitude; this we ourselves witnessed. What will it cost Thee now to repeat that miracle? Nothing but the willing of it. Thou pitiest this famishing crowd; we beg Thee to act as Thy heart prompts and send them away filled." And yet none of the apostles asked this favor of Our Lord in behalf of the hungry multitude; they contented themselves with saying to Him: *"From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness?"* They said that it was simply impossible to procure enough bread in that desert place to feed such a multitude, and this was precisely the declaration that Jesus wished them to make in order that they might themselves confess and avow the miracle He was about to perform. Hence turning to them He said: *"How many loaves have you?"* They replied: *"Seven."*

It would seem that the apostles brought those loaves with them as a provision against extreme need, for the question is put in a form that implies

that the loaves belonged to them: *"How many loaves have you?"*

In reading such facts in the Gospel our mind unconsciously draws comparisons that are instructive. The apostles formed one family of which Jesus Christ was naturally the head. They possessed nothing, absolutely nothing, and Jesus Christ, their divine Head, protested that He had not a foot of earth, that He could call His own, whereon to lay His head. Being in the desert with His beloved apostles, He learned that the only provisions that He and they had were seven loaves of bread. Can we imagine greater want and poverty than this? My friends, when the trials of poverty come upon you and straiten you, when at the end of a long and toilsome day you return to your homes and find your tables scantily provided, complain not of your hard life, do not upbraid Providence, do not raise your voice in anger against the world, against the rich, who are rioting in superabundance; no, never, but think of Jesus there in the desert, who at the close of a day of toil, fatigued and worn, had not a roof to shelter Him, a bed of straw on which to rest, and only seven small loaves or biscuits to divide among His apostles. Ah, the farmer, the laborer, in whom the Faith is living and strong, will find greater comfort in thinking of the laborious life of Jesus and of His poverty, than all the books of the learned can supply.

Some of you may be surprised that Jesus asked the apostles how many loaves they had. Was not Jesus all-knowing? Certainly. Why, then, did

He put a question to the apostles that implied that He wished them to tell Him what He already knew? Because having made Himself man, He accommodated Himself in all things in the natural order to other men; and because by asking the apostles, *"How many loaves have you?"* He forced them to reflect how small was their provision of bread, and in consequence, to admit the evidence for the miracle He was about to perform and its greatness.

Having received the answer of the apostles, *"He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground."* This command was likely conveyed to the crowd through the apostles, as was done at the first multiplication of the five loaves and two fishes. He desired the multitude to sit down that they might rest, as it distressed Him to see them, tired as they were, standing up, and also that the apostles might more easily distribute among them the bread He was about to multiply. Jesus Christ, as you see, forgets nothing; He disposes all things with the simplicity and delicate thoughtfulness of a loving father.

When the crowd was seated, *"taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke and gave to the disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people."*

Here there are a few things to be noted. The bread multiplied in the hands of Christ; how this came about I have explained in another homily and it is unnecessary to repeat it here. Before multiplying the bread He gave thanks to God, and of course blessed it, as He afterward blessed the fishes. After giving thanks to God He blessed

the bread,[1] that is, He prayed in order to show that the multiplication was not a human work, but a divine, and that all the honor belonged to God. The bread multiplied in the hands of Christ under the eyes of the apostles and of the multitude, in an open place, in the full light of day, and the multiplication must have lasted until the wants of all were supplied and until it had been distributed to those thousands of persons. The evidence attesting the miracle could not have been more splendid or more solemnly impressive.

In multiplying the loaves in His hands Jesus could, if He would, have had them pass directly from His own into the hands of those who were eating, without having them pass through the hands of the apostles; but He did not wish to do so; He wished that the miraculously multiplied loaves should go first into the hands of the apostles and pass through their hands into those of the multitude; and this, if I mistake not, for two reasons, first, in order that the apostles, if the expression may be allowed, might touch the miracle with their hands, and thus have their faith powerfully strengthened; and, next, Jesus Christ would have us understand that, as this bodily food, so marvelously multiplied, should reach those who had need of it only by means of the apostles, so by the same means must the food of the soul, truth and grace, be constantly com-

[1]Cornelius à Lapide commenting on this blessing of Christ, says: "Videtur Christus post gratiarum actiones, signando panes *cruce* eos benedixisse," etc. According to him Christ blessed the loaves with the *sign of the cross!* To me it seems remarkable that Christ would use the sign of the cross. The use of this sign should not begin until after the death of Christ, and had it been used by Him before that, what significance would it have had?

municated to men. And this is a truth, my friends, which we do not bring home to ourselves as we ought. We can not have access to God except through Jesus Christ, the God-Man and our supreme mediator, and we can not have access to Jesus Christ except through His Church, that is, through the priesthood, through which Jesus Christ continues His ordinary work of sanctification on earth. God alone, Jesus Christ alone, is the author and the exhaustless fountain of truth and grace; but He ordinarily and constantly communicates this grace and truth to men through the agency of the priest; through him Jesus Christ teaches, through him He baptizes, through him He confirms, through him He consecrates, through him He looses from sin, through him, in a word, He diffuses the light of truth and pours out the floods of His vivifying grace upon the earth. Take away the priesthood and you pull down the bridge that connects earth with heaven and heaven with earth; take away the priesthood and you snap the thread and break the wonderful bond through which passes the current of divine life that sustains us poor pilgrims and wayfarers in this land of exile. This is why Jesus Christ gave the loaves to the apostles, to be through them distributed to the multitude: "*And He gave to the disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people.*" My friends, it will always be our endeavor to continue the office of the apostles, to distribute to all of you the heavenly bread of truth and grace, but you also should be anxious to receive it from our hands.

The Evangelist notes that, besides the seven

loaves, the apostles had also a few small fishes: "*They had a few little fishes,*" and these also Jesus multiplied together with the bread, and like the loaves they were distributed to the multitude. These two articles were the ordinary food of the poor people, and especially of those who dwelt along the shores of the lake, where fish was plentiful. Jesus to feed the multitude wrought a miracle indeed, but, you will observe, the miracle produced only the ordinary food, such as was commonly used among those people, namely, bread and fish, and not rare and delicate viands, thus teaching us that we should provide for our needs according to our state in life.

St. Mark adds: "*And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.*" It would seem that here, too, as in the first multiplication, the fragments were gathered up by order of Jesus Christ, either to still further confirm the miracle, or to teach us that we ought to waste nothing, for what may not be necessary for us may be useful to others. There were seven loaves, and after satisfying that enormous multitude, there were left over and gathered up exactly seven basketsful, Jesus Christ wishing thus by the number of baskets of fragments to remind all of the number of loaves that had been multiplied.[1]

The Evangelist brings his narrative of the miracle to an end by telling us approximately the number that was fed. He says: "*And they*

[1]By a basketful is meant, so interpreters say, the quantity of bread one might *carry* in his hand.

that had eaten were about four thousand.'' St. Matthew in narrating the same miracle says there were four thousand, not counting women and children;[1] and hence it may be taken for granted that, all included, there were not less than ten thousand, an enormous multitude, which still further establishes the certainty of the miracle. Having fed that immense multitude, and, as we may suppose, receiving in turn their blessings, applause, and acclamations, He quietly took leave of them: *''And He sent them away,''* and departed from them either to put an end to the triumph, of which He was the object, or to betake Himself, as was His wont, to silence and peace in prayer.

[1] xv. 38.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XV

BRETHREN: I speak an human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free men to justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* vi. 19-23.

THE homilies I am giving, as you know, are simply a commentary on the Epistles and Gospels of the respective Sundays as they come round. This method has its advantages; it is based upon the example of the Fathers, it is in keeping with the prescription of the Council of Trent, and it affords an opportunity to set forth the teaching of Holy Scripture; still it is not exempt from certain drawbacks, the chief of which is that the Epistles and Gospels read in Holy Mass are taken from various places in the Gospels and the apostolic Letters, and thus detached from their context. Hence being so detached from what precedes and from what follows, they rarely present

a complete whole which can be taken by itself and understood without reference to the text of which it forms a part, and this is especially true of the Epistles. To form a correct judgment of a branch that has been cut from a tree it is essential to see the tree from which it has been taken. I find the same method necessary in giving my explanations, particularly of the Epistles. To get at the true meaning of the words I comment on, I am obliged to know what goes before these words, and thus catch the line of reasoning and see the connection between the parts.

The scope of the apostle St. Paul, in his Letters to the Romans, is to show that one who is baptized is in duty bound to lead a new life, the life of Jesus Christ, and to cease living the life of the old man, the life of sin. The development of this thought furnishes St. Paul an opportunity of making a very beautiful and practical application of it. He says that whatever faculty or organ we made to serve as an instrument of sin before being baptized, after being baptized we should make the same faculty or organ serve as an instrument of justice. And here begins the text of the Epistle which you have just heard and which is the subject of this homily.

"*I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification.*"

"I have told you that by Baptism you *have been made servants of justice,*" then as if excusing himself, St. Paul adds: "The word servant may

seem harsh and offensive to you, since to be a servant or a slave implies that you have lost what man esteems most highly and loves best, namely, his liberty, but I am compelled to use the word, as I can find no other that will serve my purpose. I am forced to write in this way because of the poverty of our language and to make myself understood as best I can; and you should not take offense at the word *servant. I speak a human thing because of the infirmity of your flesh.*"

The phrase: "*I speak a human thing,*" may possibly also mean that he speaks *bluntly* to them, *naturally,* and in a way *easily* understood. And what is his meaning? "As long," he says, "as you lived in sin, indulging your passions, you were slaves to your passions and bore their shameful yoke. Your members were instruments of sin; your eyes, your ears, your tongue, your hands and your feet, your whole body, how were they all employed if not in serving in a thousand ways as instruments of sin? You despise a slave and will not consent to be the slaves of any one, and yet you were the slaves of every *uncleanness and iniquity,* going headlong from *iniquity unto iniquity,* and now you ought not blush to *serve justice and virtue unto sanctification.*"

One of the old Fathers of the Church has left us this commentary on the words of St. Paul: "By these words the Apostle wished to make his readers ashamed of themselves, so that they might pay that homage to virtue which they had formerly paid to vice, as if to say: Formerly your feet were swift to run in the way of sin, now let them be equally swift to run in the way of virtue;

formerly your hands were stretched forth to seize the property of others, now let them be stretched forth to distribute their own in alms; formerly your eyes looked covetously on your neighbor's goods, let them now look upon the poor to pity and succor them; let every member that ministered unto vice, now minister unto virtue; and what it then did to serve uncleanness, let it now do to serve unto chastity and holiness.'"[1]

"*Serve justice unto sanctification.*" The word *slave* or servant, grates upon you; you do not wish to hear it; the very sound of it is an insult to your dignity, but remember there was a time when "*you were slaves of sin*" and when "*you were free from justice,*" or from the yoke of virtue: "*For when you were servants of sin, you were free from justice.*"

Here it is necessary to go into a fuller explanation of the thought of the Apostle. There is good and there is evil, there is virtue and there is vice, there is the law of God and the law of the world and of the flesh. We are placed between the law of God and the law of the world, between vice and virtue, between good and evil. We must necessarily adhere to the one or to the other; to be indifferent is impossible, and were it possible, it would mean that we would take the part of evil,

[1]"Pudorem hisce verbis auditoribus incutit Apostolus, ut hoc saltem obsequii impendant justitiæ quod prius impenderunt iniquitati, quasi dicat: Currebant prius pedes vestri ad effundendum, nunc autem ad liberandum sanguinem current. Protendebantur manus prius ut aliena diriperent, nunc protendantur ut propria largiantur. Circumspiciebant prius oculi ad concupiscendum alienum, nunc circumspiciant pauperes ad miserandum et uniuscujusque membri ministerium, quod exhibuit vitiis, aptet virtutibus, et actum quem exhibuit immunditiæ, ad castitatem nunc sanctitatemque convertat."—ORIGEN.

of vice, and of the world, since he who is not with Christ is against Him. We must, then, as an absolute necessity of our condition serve either good or evil, either vice or virtue, either God or the world; nature itself forces us to take either the one side or the other, to choose between being a slave of God or a slave of the world, of sin or of justice. Offensive as this word *to serve* may be, it can not be withdrawn from this sovereign law. Now up to the day when you believed in Christ and were baptized, whom did you *serve?* asks the Apostle. You served sin: "*You were servants of sin.*" In serving sin you did not serve unto justice; you were loosed from its yoke; you were free; and now, so reasons the Apostle, which do you think is the more worthy, to serve sin or to serve justice? You must bend the neck either to the one yoke or to the other, and who will not say that it is better to serve justice than to serve sin?

Man is a strange and incredible contradiction. There is in him an innate tendency to regard any one as an enemy who attempts to limit his independence; he thinks it his inalienable right to use his liberty as he pleases. He sees only his rights and his liberty; he is impatient of any one who speaks to him of duties and dependence, and he readily forgets that he has any duties. What is man's liberty in its true meaning? It is the privilege of using his powers, of doing or not doing certain acts, of not being hindered in the exercise of his faculties and his rights. Now, can a man's liberty be conceived as separated from his duty to respect the rights of others or their liberty? Evidently not. Every man is surrounded by other

men who have the same rights that he has, and hence there are liberties that limit his, and where the liberty of others begins, his ceases. Above him, again, is the civil and political authority with its laws, and the Church with her laws; and above the civil authority and the Church, there is God, the absolute Master of all. Now as regards the rights of other men, as regards the civil authority, the authority of God and His Church, what is the duty of every man? How is he to use his liberty? He is to use it by subjecting it to those who have a right to its subjection. Only then is it properly used, only then does man use his powers as he should, only then does he exactly fulfil his duties, when he respects the rights of others. This is *true liberty.*

I should indeed be happy if I could make you comprehend in what *true liberty* consists. It consists not in being free to do what one pleases, whether it be good or evil, but solely in discharging one's duties, in doing right, for this alone can benefit us. To see, the eye is dependent on light; to breathe, the lungs are dependent upon air; to circulate, the blood is dependent on the heart, and so on of all the members of the body, each of which is more or less dependent on the others. Now what would you say if, on pretence of enjoying a fuller liberty, the eye should refuse the light, or the lungs should attempt to get on without air, or the blood should disdain to be served by the heart, and each member should reject the aid of the others and set out to do for itself? We should then have absolute disorder and death. It is the due dependence of each member of the body

upon all, that creates and maintains the liberty of each, and so, also, is it our legitimate dependence upon, or in other words, the exact fulfilment of our duties to our fellow-men, to all authority, and above all to God, that gives us true liberty and secures us in its possession; and it is in this sense that Christ said that he who commits sin is its slave, and that he is free, who is free from sin. Let us not, then, my friends, confuse things; let us not give the sacred name of liberty to slavery, nor call true liberty by the vile name of slavery. He is a slave who obeys his passions and serves sin; he, on the contrary, is a free man who curbs his passions, who casts sin out from his heart, and serves justice and virtue, for man by his nature is made to serve virtue and not to serve sin.

Here is a son who refuses to obey his parents, and instead obeys a servant, whom he should command, boasting that he is free to do as he likes. Would you say that this son is really free? On the contrary, you would say that the son who obeys his parents and commands his servant is free, because justice and order require this. So also we should say that one who casts off the yoke of sin and serves God, his Father, to serve whom is to reign, is truly free. My friends, let us cease calling light darkness and darkness light, liberty servitude and servitude liberty. Let us serve justice, serve God, and we shall be free from sin and from the bondage of the world. Never since time began was liberty as much talked of as it is to-day and never was the idea of it more false and confused. How many now think that liberty consists in doing what one likes, be it good or bad! How

many demand for themselves the most unlimited liberty, caring not a whit whether or not, in the exercise of this liberty, they violate the liberty of others. Such liberty would turn the world upside down and lead to the most shameful slavery. Bear well in mind that to have true liberty, according both to reason and to the Gospel, it is essential that every one shall respect and observe all the laws of God and of His Church, and all the laws of civil authority, and that every one shall fulfil his own duties and scrupulously respect the rights of others. If all follow this rule you may be sure that you will enjoy true liberty and be really free.

And now to return to our commentary, St. Paul follows up and again enforces the truth already referred to, namely that we must serve justice and not sin: "*What fruit had you then of those things of which you are now ashamed?*" Time was, says St. Paul, before your new birth in Baptism, when you did the works of sin, and now looking back upon that time in the light of faith, do not your cheeks burn with very shame at the thought? Are you not overpowered at the memory of so degrading a servitude? And this is a proof that to serve sin is not liberty, but an unworthy and shameful slavery; because were it liberty, we should, instead of being abashed and of blushing at the very thought of having done so, rejoice and glory in it.

Not only, the Apostle goes on, does the serving of sin fill us with shame and confusion, but what is worse, it merits a frightful retribution; for the end of the works of sin is death: "*For the end*

of them is death." What sort of death? Everlasting death.[1] Away then with sin, which, having filled us with shame and confusion here, if not in the sight of men, certainly in our own conscience and before God, condemns us to a life that is a living death for all time to come. Away with the servitude of sin that dishonors, pollutes, and murders the soul.

What, then, must be done? "*Loosed* (or being made) *free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, life everlasting.*" St. Paul has condensed into this verse all the duties of man in time and his destiny in eternity, namely, break with the passions and with sin, which is their fruit, sanctify yourselves by the practice of virtue and thus attain your last end, eternal life. "*And the end of the servants of God is life everlasting.*"

The following verse, which is the last of the Epistle, is but a repetition of what has already been explained: "*For the wages of sin is death, but grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" The word *stipend* used by St. Paul, is a military term and means the wages paid a soldier. You have served your passions, St. Paul seems to say, you have served sin, you have fought as soldiers under the banner of sin, and now you have the recompense due to so infamous a warfare; your wages is eternal death. Will you turn your backs on sin? Will you take service under the standard of justice and fight gallantly in

[1]Here the word death means *eternal death*, as is clear from the following verse where St. Paul, writing antithetically according to his wont, and speaking of the fruit of sanctification, as the opposite of the fruit of sin, calls it *life everlasting.*

its behalf? If so, your stipend, your reward, will be the gift of God, life everlasting: *"But the grace of God, life everlasting."*

Here a difficulty arises. In other passages of his writings St. Paul tells us that everlasting life is a *crown* due to him who has fought manfully and won, that is, it is the recompense of labor and is rigorously due as a matter of justice; and Jesus Christ Himself tells us to rejoice and be glad because our reward is very great in heaven. How, then, can St. Paul call a recompense, that is due in justice, a favor or gift: *"But the grace of God, life everlasting?"* If it is a gift, it is not a wage, and if it is a wage it can not be a gift or favor. Has the Apostle here contradicted himself? The Apostle does not, and assuredly can not contradict himself, and it is not difficult to reconcile the two statements. Life eternal is a recompense due in justice to our exertions, and God Himself can not deny it to one who has honestly earned it. But how and by what means do we do works meritorious of eternal life? By the means of the *grace,* which is a gift of God. Is grace, the first grace, due to us by any work or merit of ours, or is it the gift of God? Grace, the first grace, is not due to any work of ours, nor can we possibly merit it in any way whatever; it is the free gift of the bounty of God. Life everlasting, then, considered in its root, is a grace, a favor, a wholly gratuitous gift of God; considered in relation to our works, which are the fruit of grace and of our co-operation with grace, it is a recompense or a crown due to us. A very familiar similitude, that of the talents in the Gospel, will illustrate this. A rich man gives his

servant a large sum of money to invest or to traffic with as he likes. What right has the servant to this money? None at all; it is a gift which a benevolent master gives him purely out of goodness of heart. Well, the servant invests the money; he trades with it, and his gains from trading and investment are enormous. His gains are the fruit of his own foresight and industry and of the money received from his generous master; and as I can say that his gain is both a gift of his master and the recompense of his own efforts, and both statements are equally true, so also can I say that heaven is a grace or gift of God and that it is the reward and recompense of our efforts and toil, since to gain both, the grace of God and our own exertions are necessary, and if either is wanting the gaining of heaven is impossible.

HOMILY XVI

At that *time Jesus said to His disciples:* Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit: neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit: every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith to Me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth

the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Gospel, *Matt.* vii. 15-21.

Such, my friends, is the Gospel read in the Mass of this Sunday, which is taken from the seventh chapter of St. Matthew. These sentences, at once beautiful and practical, are part of that wonderful discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount, in which is substantially contained the whole moral teaching of Jesus Christ. In the fourteen verses that precede the passage just read, Jesus forbids us to pass judgment on our neighbor and bids us mend our own lives before correcting what we may fancy wrong in the lives of others; He next gives a warning against casting pearls before swine, or giving what is sacred to the unworthy; inculcates prayer and illustrates its efficacy; and, after saying that the way that leads to life is narrow and the way that leads to destruction broad, He tells us to guard against corrupters of the truth and against teachers of error, who come to us professing to be preachers of Gospel truth. If this admonition was necessary at the time of Christ, it is incomparably more necessary now, when the sowers of scandal and the teachers of dangerous doctrines have increased beyond all reckoning.

A loving and provident father gives a vast sum of money to his deserving sons, and, knowing their inexperience and the arts and devices of wicked men, who will try to rob them of it, he earnestly and repeatedly warns them to be cautious and to carefully guard their treasure. What could be

more natural than this? So also Jesus Christ, as the Gospel states, after announcing the most sublime moral truths to the apostles and to the crowds gathered about Him and knowing the dangers that surrounded them, said: *"Beware of false prophets."* The word prophet, as you know, has many meanings in Sacred Scripture; it signifies one who foretells the future; or again, a pious and a virtuous man; or again, a worker of miracles; or again, simply a teacher of sacred truth, and this last is the meaning, as is clear, that it bears in the Gospel of to-day. But as there are good men and bad, men truly pious and men who are hypocrites, so are there true prophets and false, teachers of truth and teachers of error, teachers to whom we are obliged to listen and teachers against whom we must close our ears, and therefore Jesus Christ raises a warning voice, saying: *"Beware of false prophets."*

Who were these false prophets, or teachers, referred to by Our Lord? They were the Scribes and Pharisees, who sought to alienate the people from Him, and misrepresented His teaching; they were the heretics, the schismatics, and all those who, He foresaw, would rise up in the course of ages and attempt to corrupt the deposit of faith and wrest it from its custodians. My friends, bear well in mind that as long as this time of trial lasts, and it will last until the world is no more, so long also will the conflict between good and evil last, between vice and virtue, between the doctrine of Christ and the false maxims of the world. As the shadow follows the substance, as sickness walks by the side of health, ever ready to make

an assault upon it; so does error walk in the wake of truth, and mingled among the teachers of the Gospels are its profaners and corrupters. Was there ever an age or a country so fortunate as to be exempt from them? No; as noxious weeds spring up beside the good grain, as chaff is mixed with the wheat, so also will the teachers of error and false prophets ever be found mingled with the teachers of truth. And how is it to-day? Perhaps never in any past age were there seen so many teachers of error, so many crafty, scheming seducers of the unwary as there are in our own. They scatter their baneful errors broadcast by every agency known to modern civilization, by books and illustrations, by word of mouth, by periodical publications, in public and in private, in schools, in conferences, and in conversation. What a host of false teachers is to be found everywhere. What a flood of false teaching and pestilential corruption is let loose upon the world, and what a consequent havoc of countless souls! What can we do, we ministers of the Church? We can only reiterate to you all in earnest and sorrowful accents the piercing cry of Jesus Christ: "*Beware of false prophets,*" but especially beware of those "*who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves.*"

The teachers of error may be divided into two classes; those who teach error openly, and those who teach it stealthily, the aim of both being to corrupt the morals of those who listen to them. If the first class is dangerous and to be shunned, much more so is the second, because we are less suspicious of those and more easily fall victims

to their artifices. In this class of false prophets must be included books in which the venom of irreligious and depraved teaching is concealed, and romances, which while seemingly harmless, kindle the fires of the baser passions. Such, too, are certain teachers of error, who claim to respect religion because they never mention it, because they profess to be indifferent toward it, and because they leave to others full liberty to practise it, as if an indifferent attitude like this would not be harmful to religion. Would not a son, who should treat his parents as if they were strangers and who should fail in fulfilling his most sacred duties toward them, do them a grievous wrong?

"*Beware of false prophets,*" says Christ, "*and especially of those who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves.*" What should we do to fulfil the precept imposed upon us by Christ, a precept which is rooted in our very nature, since nature itself impels us to avoid any danger that threatens us, and of all dangers, that of living in the midst of false prophets is the greatest? Must we leave the world? Must we bid farewell to all social intercourse? Must we lay down our offices and dignities? Must we betake ourselves to the solitude of the cloister? No, all this is not demanded. The conditions of each of us are various and different, and different and various are the dangers to which each of us is exposed in this world of scandal and error. Let each one do his best to shun scandal and to suppress error, and if it is not possible for him to prevent dangers from arising or wholly to close his ears to false prophets, be they who or what they

may, let him pray to God fervently, and put his trust in God, and God will not permit him to be tried beyond his strength.

"Beware of false prophets." Yes, we shall do so, O Lord, because it is Thy command and charity to ourselves demands it. But since Thou sayest that they will come in the guise of sheep, how shall we be able with certainty to know them? By what marks will they be distinguished? The divine Master answers: *"By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit."* The way by which the teachers of error are to be distinguished from the teachers of truth is to examine and compare their fruits, the works of each, says Our Lord; if these are good, the teacher is a teacher of truth; if evil, the teacher is a teacher of error, and must not be listened to. This rule given by Christ Himself, is not without its difficulties, which it is well to examine and answer.

Jesus Christ in the very first words of this chapter says: *"Judge not, that you may not be judged,"* and this admonition, repeated by St. Paul, is made imperative on us by a sense of our incapacity and ignorance and by the law of charity, which forbids us to allow any sinister suspicion to enter our minds injurious to our neighbor; how is it, then, that Jesus here commands us carefully to scrutinize the conduct of those who announce the word of God, and thus ascertain whether or not their works are in harmony with their teaching? Is not this to begin by suspecting

their conduct? Is it not to set ourselves up as their judges, contrary to the words of Christ Himself, who says: *"Judge not, that you may not be judged?"* Certainly Jesus Christ can not in this place direct us to do what He forbids a few verses before. We undoubtedly ought not to judge, or even to suspect, the honesty and uprightness of our neighbor unless we have a good and sufficient reason for doing so, any more than we ought not to correct him or to refuse to associate with him; but when there is a question of ascertaining whether he is a teacher of truth or a teacher of error, and therefore when there is question of the most important of all matters for me, namely, that of the saving or losing of my soul, not only may I, but I must, examine and accurately investigate and then judge for myself whether or not I may listen to him. The charity which I must exercise toward others and toward myself is a complete justification of my judgment, and I should be both imprudent and guilty if I did not so judge. If I had not the right of comparing facts with the doctrine preached to me, I should be forced to believe any one who presented himself before me claiming to be a teacher of the truth, and I should be liable to become the victim or dupe of any apostle of error. Of what use would be the reason with which God has endowed me if I could not use it to distinguish error from truth, and thus embrace the one and spurn the other? I do not, then, violate charity; on the contrary, I do homage to it, when, from love of truth, I subject to the test of reason the arguments a man advances and to which he wishes me to give my assent. It is

true that such a judgment must be formed with prudence and discretion, and after seeking light from men who, both by wisdom and authority, are qualified to give it and to guide me to the knowledge of the truth. Once authority has spoken we may and should acquiesce in its judgment, but until it has spoken we must follow the guidance of our reason and use every means to form a correct judgment.

And here another difficulty arises, and not a trifling one, with regard to this rule given us by Christ to distinguish the teachers of truth from the teachers of error: "*By their fruits you shall know them,*" that is, their lives and their works shall be the test and the proof of the doctrine they teach. Are the ministers of religion all without sin? Did not Jesus Christ Himself, speaking of the teachers of Israel, say: "*All things whatsoever they shall say to you observe and do, but according to their works do ye not?*" By these words He would have us to understand that at times the lives of men are not in keeping with the truths they teach. And do we not ourselves see instances in which the lives and conduct of sacred ministers are condemned by the doctrine they preach? And do we not know persons, seemingly leading good lives, who have abjured the teaching of the Gospel, and it may be make war upon it? How, then, could our Saviour say, that if we would test the truth of a doctrine, we must examine the works of those who promulgate it, and that if their works are good, their doctrine is good, and if their works are evil, so also is their doctrine, for a good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit? Wo to us if

the works, or lives, of sacred ministers were always a sure and infallible criterion of the doctrine they teach! How, then, is this Gospel rule, given us by Jesus Christ Himself, to be understood?

This rule is not to be uniformly applied to each and every teacher; if it were so applied it would be fallacious and erroneous, for, as in the instance of Caiphas, a bad minister may announce the most sacred truths. He was a prophet and yet he counseled the killing of Christ; nay more, he pronounced solemn judgment of death upon Him. Again, the moral conduct of a teacher of error may be above reproach and unbelievers may at times exemplify in their lives certain virtues better than some believers do. This rule, then, was given us by Jesus Christ to distinguish true prophets from false, not absolutely and in all cases, but generally; that is, in the majority of cases the rule is good and useful. So also we say: Do not trust flatterers or those who talk much; they will betray you. We do not mean by this that flatterers and those who talk much always betray, and betray every one; we only mean that they are likely to prove traitors and that it is not safe to trust them. So also Christ's meaning is: Beware of false prophets; generally you will know them by their works, for as a rule the doctrine of those whose works are evil, is also evil, since the tree is known by the quality of its fruit.

Examining the words of Christ more closely, I believe they can be understood in another sense; a sense, too, that is clearer and more in harmony with the context of the Gospel. Would you know the character of any doctrine and form a judg-

ment as to whether it is good or bad? Do not judge of it by the conduct of those who announce it, but by its consequences and by the result of its practical application. There are certain doctrines which of their very nature produce such bad fruit, fruit so pernicious, that by it their falsity is at once discovered without long study or profound examination. For example, it is said: In order to be happy we must follow the instincts of nature; after this life all is over; everything ends in the grave; all religions are equally good; every one has a right to think and do as he pleases; the only rule for man to follow is to seek his own interests; faith without works is sufficient for salvation; man is not free and whatever he does he does of necessity. The light of reason tells us that these doctrines, put in practice, would of their very nature produce the most direful effects; and no further proof is wanted than the doctrines themselves, to show that those who spread them are false prophets and should not be listened to. As an evil tree can bring forth only evil fruit, so those teachers and those doctrines can produce only bad works.

My friends, there is no concealing the fact that in these days we very often, too often, see published in books and magazines and newspapers, and hear announced in conversation, in public assemblies, and from the chairs of professors, doctrines which, if generally diffused and put in practice, would destroy all idea of morality and justice, all distinction between good and evil, between vice and virtue, between truth and falsehood, and would root up from the very foundation, not only

all religion, but all domestic and social order. In reading or hearing those doctrines you would instantly know what judgment to pass upon them. The fruits they produce, both in the individual and on society, are mischievous and fatal; therefore, have nothing to do either with the doctrines themselves or with those who are trying to disseminate them; these are false prophets; their works sufficiently reveal them: "*From their works you shall know them.*" If the fruit is bad the tree is also bad: "*The evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*"

What does God do with those evil trees that produce only bad fruit? He does just what the farmer does with trees that produce no fruit, or only fruit that is sour, tasteless, and worm-eaten; he cuts them down, roots them up from the soil they cumber and pitches them into the fire. So also will God do when those mischievous sowers of pernicious doctrines shall have gone hence; He will cast them into endless fire: "*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*"

In illustrating these terrible words, Jesus Christ pronounces another judgment of gravest import, and with it the Gospel closes: "*Not every one that sayeth to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of My Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" He had spoken of the good tree and of the bad, of the good fruit and of the bad; He had said that the tree is judged by its fruit, and that a tree that produces no fruit shall be pitilessly cut down and pitched into the fire; and now He goes on to insist on the necessity

of bringing forth fruit or good works, and these He summarizes in this one: doing the will of God, or, in other words, observing the divine law. In those days, as in our own, there were many whose religion consisted in faith alone, and who cared little or nothing for works, as if these were not necessary as well as faith. Their religion consisted in calling on God, in going to the Temple, in doing the material works of religion, in offering sacrifices, in saying long prayers, in prostrating themselves before God's majesty and crying: "Lord, Lord." But as to keeping the heart clean, being humble of spirit and just in their dealings; as to being mortified, as to curbing their passions and loving their kind; in a word, as to all those works which are the expression, the living substance of religion, they did not give them a thought. As Christ says in the Gospel, they honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. All such, says the divine Master, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

My friends, I trust there is none among you against whom these reproofs and threats of Christ can be directed. To visit churches, to pray, to go on pilgrimages, and to observe other external religious practices are all in their way good works and holy; but they are not enough; we must do works of charity, keep the heart clean, and subjugate the passions; in a word, lead a truly Christian life. Without this, everything else is only apparent; it is chaff that is whirled away by the wind; a splendid and luxuriant foliage will not save from the burning the tree that it clothes and beautifies.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XVII

BRETHREN: We are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.—EPISTLE, *Rom.* viii. 12-17.

THE teaching contained in these six verses, the form of expression, the turn of the sentences, tell us at once that this passage of the Epistle is from St. Paul; it is taken from the eighth chapter of his Letter to the Romans. Of the fourteen Letters left us by St. Paul, that to the Romans is the most important as well because of the copiousness and profundity of its dogmatic and moral teaching as because of the amplitude of its development; and of the sixteen chapters it contains, this, in my judgment, reaches the most sublime heights, treating as it does of the nature and of the effects of the new birth wrought through Christ.

After referring to the happy condition of those

who are born anew in Christ, as compared with those who live according to the flesh, he says that the Holy Spirit will abide in them and will one day raise them up, as He had already raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. And here begins the text I am to explain, to which you will, my friends, give close attention.

"*We are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.*" As you likely know, the Apostle means by the word *flesh* the old man, the man of sin, the corrupt man, the man who is a slave to his passions, which have their root chiefly in the flesh, and therefore he calls him simply *the flesh;* and by the word *spirit* he means the new man, the man of grace, the man who is new-born in Baptism, the man who follows the spirit of Christ, and hence he calls him *the spirit.* In Baptism grace came into our soul, cancelled sin and put into it a new germ, a new force, and a new life, a participation of the very life of Christ; yet this life does not destroy the consequences of sin; it allows the old man to abide together with the new; it allows concupiscence to exist together with grace, and the flesh and its passions, together with the spirit of Christ, in order that there may be an opportunity or field for the exercise of virtue. My friends, have you ever seen a delicate flower, a beautiful rose, or a dazzling white lily springing up in the midst of a swamp or marsh? This is an image of a Christian; within him is the grace of Jesus Christ, a delicate shrub on which lilies and roses will bloom, but the soil in which it is rooted and from which it springs is a marsh, out of which pestilential vapors fre-

quently rise; and such a soil is our body, our corrupt nature, in which the baser passions find a lurking-place and a home. What, then, are we to do? We are to do what the painstaking florist does; he disregards the marsh, he dislikes it, he is careful not to step into it for fear of getting his feet soiled, he averts his eyes from it, but he keeps his thoughts on the rose and the lily, he contemplates them with satisfaction and delight and tends them with assiduous and loving care.

So also should we do, my dear friends. As I have said, Jesus Christ has given us His grace; we gave ourselves to Him in holy Baptism, we made Him a solemn promise to live a life like His, to live according to His spirit, and to make war on the world, the devil, and the flesh. Of what benefit has the flesh been to us? What benefit can we expect from it? It has been and can be of no benefit to us, and we have everything to fear from it. Let us, then, not live according to the flesh. "*We are not debtors to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh.*" The flesh bids us to follow it; it urges us to pursue vanity, to accumulate riches, to eat and drink and live luxuriously, to pass our days in sloth and idleness, to hate those who offend us and do us harm, to seek to be revenged, to indulge the cravings of sense, and to do other things equally wicked and degrading. Let us not follow the flesh by leading lives of sin and shame; it has no claim upon us that we should follow it, and wo to us if we do. And why? Because St. Paul says that if we live according to the flesh we shall die: "*For if you live according to the flesh you shall die.*" The goal to which our

sinful passions will infallibly lead us, if we gratify them (remember it well!), is death. What death? The death of the soul, and with the death of the soul, the death of the body also; both shall perish everlastingly. Who among us that has not a horror of death? Who among us does not use every means to escape it? What would any of us not do to repel its fatal touch? Well, then, let us not live according to the flesh; let us make manful war on the flesh and its depraved passions, and we shall not be the prey of death.

No, we shall do as the great apostle bids us; we shall not live according to the flesh. How, then, shall we live? What will be our rule of life? The Apostle tells us: "*If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.*" Do you understand, my friends? Armed with divine grace, as with a two-edged sword, and strengthened by the power infused into us by Baptism and the other sacraments, we must withstand the deeds of the flesh; we must extinguish the evil desires that originate and thrive in the flesh; only on this condition shall we live, only on this condition shall we possess the eternal life of the soul and with it the eternal life of the body. I know that frequently it is only at the price of the most acute suffering that we can bring ourselves to curb our passions and sternly to chastise our perverse inclinations, and that nature rises in rebellion and stubbornly refuses to submit when certain heroic measures are taken; but if we will live we must submit; "*If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.*"

Here, say, is an unfortunate man who has

gangrene in an arm, or in a foot, or some other part of the body. The most skilful surgeons are called in; they make an examination, they consult together, and finally they unanimously decide that there must be an operation. The patient grows pale and anxiously inquires if there is no other remedy. No, say the surgeons, the knife must be used and that promptly, or you must die. The wretched man submits, allows the knife to go into the flesh and stoically parts with the gangrened limb, but with what atrocious pain, God only knows.

Men such as he find in their will, in the fear of death, and in the desire of temporal life, strength sufficient to submit to fire and steel and to suffer untold agonies, and sometimes to no purpose; and can we not find in our wills, sustained and invigorated by grace, and in our fear of death and in our desire of eternal life, strength sufficient to correct a sinful habit, to root out a guilty attachment, to cut away an execrable passion, which is eating like a cancer into the life of the soul and threatening it with death? Is it that the fear of eternal death and the love of eternal life exercise a less potent influence over our hearts than the fear of temporal death and the love of temporal life? If so, we are the very worst of reasoners.

The Apostle goes on to say that if we do not indulge the appetites of the flesh, and if on the contrary, we live according to the spirit or the grace of Jesus Christ, not only shall we not die, but we shall possess life, the life of the sons of God: *"For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* This expression

of the Apostle is a very strong one, and it may lead one to suspect that our liberty is in danger. If we are led by the Spirit, it will be objected, then is our liberty taken away; and, if our liberty is taken away, there is no opportunity for merit and there will be no difference between us and the brute creation. We need not fear, my friends, that the Spirit of God will either take away or enfeeble our liberty; on the contrary, He respects it, sustains it, aids it, for it is written, that where the Spirit of God is, there also is liberty.[1] The tree is shaken and bent by the wind, the earth and the planets move around the sun, the ship is driven in this direction and that by the pilot, horses are guided by the driver and go whither he wills; is it thus that God moves our wills by His Spirit? Assuredly not. If He did so lead us our liberty would be destroyed. The tree must bow before the rush of the wind; the earth and the planets are not free not to move around the sun; the ship can not resist the pilot; and horses are constrained to obey the bit. How, then, are our wills moved by grace and yet remain free? Let us illustrate. Say that when you were growing up your father and mother gave you such admonitions as these: "Children do not go to such and such a place, because you run a great risk in doing so. Apply yourselves to your studies; go regularly to school; do not eat such and such food, or take such and such drink, and neither eat nor

[1] "Dicit mihi aliquis: Ergo agimur, non agimus. Respondeo, imo et agis et ageris. Tunc bene agis, si a bono agaris. Spiritus enim Dei, qui te agit, adjutor est agentibus. Nemo autem agitatur, si ab illo nihil agatur. Spiritus enim adjuvat infirmitatem nostram."—St. Augustine, Ser. iii, De verbis Apost.

drink at irregular hours. All this we tell you for your good. If you refuse to follow our counsel, it will be all the worse for you; if, on the contrary you do what we desire, it will give us much pleasure and earn a reward for you." What would you have done? To escape punishment, and still more out of love for your parents, you would have followed their advice, you would have done their will, you would have allowed yourself to be guided by their spirit. In so doing would you have lost your liberty? Assuredly not. Might you not have done just the contrary to what they advised and commanded? Who doubts it? And it is quite possible that in part you might have disobeyed them and that you would now regret it. Our heavenly Father acts in the same way in regard to us; He makes known to us what we ought to do and what we ought not to do; He points out to us the path in which we should walk and that in which we should not walk; He tells us to take the one and to avoid the other; He gives us strength of soul necessary to do what He commands and yet He does not constrain us; He leaves us free to do His will or not to do it. God moves us, but only as a free agent may be moved; He moves us as we might move the liberty of a friend, or of our children, by pointing out the truth to them, by animating them, by beseeching them, by threatening them, by begging them, by enticing them and by using a hundred other expedients to move their will and bring it to follow our own.[1] Do we

[1]There is a vast difference between our action on one another and the action of God upon any one of us; we can not act on others except externally, whereas God acts both externally and

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force their will and do violence to it? Certainly not. God acts upon us in the same way with His grace, and, as any one can see, His grace instead of limiting, aids our liberty, just as our commands and our incitements to good were an aid to our children.

In as much as we are moved and led by the Spirit, we are, says St. Paul, the sons of God: "*For whosoever is led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*"

This is a sublime doctrine and should be well understood, and to make it clear I will use a similitude. Here is a father, a model of every virtue, who has two sons; the one is a faithful copy of the father, like him pious and virtuous; the other just the opposite, proud, irascible, avaricious, envious, dissolute, vicious, and an unbeliever. Are they the sons of the same father? Undoubtedly, since both have received their life through him, and according to the order of nature, they are brothers and are so called by every one. But if as regards their human life they are brothers, and sons of the same father, are they so as regards their moral life? Certainly not, and the father himself in his sorrow frequently exclaims: "You are no son of mine;" and the people confirm what the father says, adding: "Surely this can not be the son of that most excellent man." In what lies the difference between them? The first has in him not only the life of the father according to nature, but he has in him that nobler and higher part of the father, his moral life; he

internally; externally He illuminates the mind, internally He moves the will and strengthens it according to its needs.

has his disposition, he is moved and led by the same spirit, and he is said to be and is, his true and perfect son. The second has also, like his brother, the life of the father according to nature, but he has not that higher and moral life; he has not the disposition of the father, he is not moved and led by the same spirit, and therefore, in this respect it is said that he is not the son of his father. So, also, we too are all created by the Father, the work of His hands; we have all been ransomed by God the Redeemer, and we are therefore equally sons of God, but if our conduct is not such as befits the sons of God, if the Spirit of God does not move and lead us, then it is truthfully said that we are not the sons of God. And now, if we examine our works, our thoughts, and our affections, and the motives that inspire them, do we find that we are like unto God and the sons of God, that we are moved and inspired by His Spirit? If we do, let us rejoice and give thanks to God; if we do not, let us resolve to do our best to be such in the future.

"*For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear.*" These words immediately follow those already explained and re-enforce them. We are sons of God led by His Spirit, and how, St. Paul asks, could we be anything else? We men of the New Law, disciples of Jesus Christ, have not received the spirit of the Old Law, the spirit of Moses. This was not the spirit and law of sons but of slaves, not of sons who love their father, but of slaves who dread their master. What does all this mean, my friends? It was characteristic of the spirit of the Old Law to inspire fear

by the severest temporal punishments, and by such punishments to hold the passions in check and inspire a horror of sin. Hence this law was mainly directed against exterior behavior and could not, except indirectly, exercise any influence on internal acts or form the heart. The Hebrews served God more from fear than from love; they were slaves rather than sons; but we, says St. Paul, are formed in another school; the Spirit that we have received, the Spirit of adopted sons of God, gives us the right to call God by the endearing name of Father: "*But you have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, that is, Father.*" God the Father, by the action of the Holy Spirit, united the Person of His Son with our nature, which the Son assumed, and He united Him with it in such way that the Man-Christ is truly God; and again Jesus Christ, true God and true man, by His grace and charity, but more still by the Most Blessed Eucharist, unites men to himself, so that they become one with Him, live of His life, participate in His very nature, and become sons, not natural sons, which is impossible, but adopted sons, and as such may call God their Father. I have already explained in another homily what this surpassing dignity of adopted sons of God implies, and I will therefore omit the explanation here.

Can we know that we have the Spirit of God in us and that we are the sons of God? Yes, answers St. Paul, "*For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.*" Now we can be certain with the certitude of faith, as in the case of the real presence of

Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, which is the greatest possible certitude and excludes even the slightest shadow of doubt, because our assent rests upon the authority of God Himself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived; and we can be certain with a human certitude, which also excludes all doubt, because it rests on the authority of our reason, or on the testimony of others; thus I am certain that there is no effect without a cause, and that Japan exists, though I have never seen it. What man in his senses would doubt either of these truths? Now, St. Paul says that we are certain that we are the sons of God. Whence comes this certitude? On what does it rest? On the testimony that the Spirit of God gives us interiorly. Is this certainty the certitude of faith?[1] No, it is not the certitude of faith, unless supported by a special revelation from God, and of this St. Paul makes no mention, and it must be regarded as entirely out of the question, since he speaks of all the faithful in general, saying: "*The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.*" This certainty is a human certitude and is greater or less according to persons and circumstances; it holds a middle place between absolute certitude and conjecture. But how does the Spirit of God assure us that we are the sons of God and therefore living in His grace and friendship? The Holy

[1]The Council of Trent teaches that one who is *justified* is not *bound of faith to believe that he is assuredly in the number of the predestined*, and that no one knows with absolute and infallible certainty that he has the great gift of perseverance unto the end, unless he has learned this by special revelation.—Sess. vi, can. xv, xvi.

Spirit of God, as we learn from Sacred Scripture and from the common teaching of the Church, tells us clearly that he, who believes the truths of faith, observes the divine law, and fulfils as best he can all the duties of his state, is sanctifying himself and working out his salvation; now, if we honestly question our conscience and it bears us witness that we have done and are doing all this, then we have a human certitude that we are living in grace and working out our salvation. How are we certain that we enjoy the friendship of this or that person? How are we certain that our parents love us? We infer it from their actions and from our own, from our feelings toward them and theirs toward us, as manifested in a thousand little ways almost too subtle for analysis, and from all this assemblage of intercourse and kind offices we are certain with a greater or less degree of certainty that we can trust to the fidelity of our friends and rely upon the love of our parents, and of this we are so sure that as a rule a doubt of it never crosses our minds. And, all allowances being made, we can say the same of the friendship and love of God.

There are some who suffer intensely and are consumed with fear because they know not whether they are in the grace of God or in sin, whether they will be lost or saved, and this uncertainty almost breaks their hearts. As Holy Scripture tells us, no one knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred; the heart of man is an abyss and only the eye of God can see it clearly; still to us it is also given partially to read it and to know enough of it to give us a measure of cer-

tainty sufficient to insure us such peace as is possible here below.

My friends, would you know whether you are in the grace of God, and as a consequence, whether you are His sons? Yes, you say at once and with one voice, and you ask how you can obtain this certainty which you so desire and which is such a comfort to you? Collect your thoughts, put yourselves face to face with your conscience and ask it these very simple questions: Do I believe all holy Mother Church teaches? Were I conscious of having committed a single mortal sin would I repent of it from my heart and sincerely confess it? If God now, at this very instant, should ask of me a great sacrifice, one that would cause me great sorrow, would I be ready, with the aid of His grace, to make it? If at this instant a distinguished honor were offered me, or a great fortune, on condition that I would consent to offend God by a single mortal sin, would I have the courage to refuse the honor and to spurn the fortune? If your conscience makes answer: "Yes, not for the most brilliant distinction or the greatest fortune would I offend God mortally," you may console yourselves that the peace of God is with you and that you are truly His children. This is a test which every one can make at any time he likes—and it is a true test.[1]

"*And if sons heirs also, and co-heirs with*

[1]These are the signs given by St. Francis de Sales which indicate that we are in the grace of God. God wishes that our certainty should have in it the element of fear to keep us from growing negligent and indolent. "Perpende, dulcissima filia," says St. Gregory the Great, to a pious lady of court, "quia mater negligentiæ solet esse securitas. Habere ergo in hac vita non debes securitatem, per quam negligens reddaris."

Christ." This is the last sentence of the Epistle. If we are sons of God, and if our souls have grown into His likeness, what will be the consequence? We shall be heirs of God. A son who is docile and loving and fulfils all his duties, has a right to the inheritance of his father; so we, if we faithfully fulfil all our duties toward God, who in His goodness has made us His sons by adoption, shall also be His heirs. And what goods shall we inherit? All things implied in the enjoyment of unending bliss, the source of which is the possession of God Himself.

But you will say: Sons whether natural or adopted, do not come into their inheritance until after the death of the father; God, our Father, never dies and can not die; why, then, are the goods which He will give us in heaven, called a heritage? They are called a heritage to indicate the relation that exists between Him and us, He the recompenser and we the recompensed, which are precisely the relations that exist between a father who adopts, and the son who is adopted. Moreover, we are brothers of Jesus Christ in as much as He was also man; and as man Jesus Christ received all goods from His Father, because He was also His Son by nature, and these goods were His heritage, and, by analogy, we being His brothers, our future goods are also called a heritage. In the natural order here on earth sons receive their inheritance only on the death of the father; in the supernatural order sons receive their inheritance from their immortal Father only after their death; in both cases it is required, before the inheritance can be obtained, that a death

shall precede it, and hence it so called. *Heirs of God*—what a dignity! What a distinction is ours! Considered in their root, which is grace, these goods, this heritage, are certainly a gratuitous gift of God; but if we consider our prerogative, as sons of God, and our works, which are the fruit of grace, they are also due to us. Children have a right in justice to their inheritance; God need not have adopted us, but having adopted us, He can not refuse us our inheritance, since He Himself has given us the right to it.

Heirs of God. These words called up in the mind of the Apostle another most exalted idea, an analogous thought, and he proceeds at once to note it: *"And co-heirs with Christ."* Yes, we are sons of God and therefore His heirs; sons and heirs of God, because the Son of God made Himself man and our brother, and through Him and in Him, God's Son by nature, and necessarily heir to the paternal inheritance, we, who are sons by God's adoption, are also heirs to the same inheritance. Everything, therefore, comes to us through Jesus Christ; to Him, then, thanks are due for all graces and for the exalted dignity to which we are raised.

Ye poor who listen to me, who earn your daily bread in the sweat of your brow, who possess, it may be, not a foot of land, who suffer all the evils and sorrows that are inseparable from poverty and squalid wretchedness, rejoice and be glad; lift up your eyes to heaven, for it is yours. God the owner and Master of all, has a Son, an only Son, who by right has come into the possession of all His Father's goods, and who in His benev-

olence has seen fit to make you all participators in His right to His paternal inheritance; you will be co-heirs with Him on this one condition, that you unite yourselves with Him by faith, hope, and charity and carry after Him the cross, which He first carried to give you an example.

HOMILY XVIII

At that time: He said also to His disciples: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: An hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when

you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xvi. 1-9.

AS THE Scribes and Pharisees were hard and cruel toward sinners, so were they niggardly and avaricious in dealing with the poor. To cure them of the first, Jesus related to them the parable of the good shepherd, who went in search of the lost sheep; of the woman who had lost the gold coin; and of the father who welcomed home his prodigal son, as we read in St. Luke,[1] and now to cure them of the second and equally grave vice of avarice, Jesus relates to them the parable of the unjust steward, which I have just read for you and which taught them, and teaches all men, the use to be made of dishonestly acquired wealth. At first sight one part of the parable may seem an approval of theft, and therefore scandalous; but if you listen attentively to the explanation you will perceive that it implies not even the shadow of an injustice, and you will understand how simple and truthful is the teaching of the Divine Master.

"*Jesus spoke to His disciples.*" As I have intimated, the parables already mentioned and this one, which immediately follows them, were, as is clear from the Gospel context, intended especially for the Scribes and Pharisees, but this fact does not prevent them from being useful to all. True, the apostles and disciples of Jesus were all poor and in consequence this parable could not have had any direct application to them, but, if not of special interest to them, it was both necessary

[1] xv.

and useful for the disciples who were to come after them, and hence it is said: "*Jesus spoke to His disciples.*" These words are to be understood in a wide sense as referring to all believers in every age.

Then follows the parable I have just read to you. We have in the parable a rich man, or the proprietor, his steward or agent, and the debtors of the proprietor. An agent or administrator is one who administers property in the name and for the benefit of the owner, to whom he must give an account and from whom he receives his recompense.

We are all, men and Christians, and especially we priests, only the administrators of the goods of this earth and not the owners of them.[1] God alone is absolute owner of all things, for He creates them and preserves them and may do with them as He wills; we have only the temporary use of them, we may only dispense them, and in using and dispensing them we must do so according to the will of the owner; this is an absolute law to which we must conform.

Let not, then, the wealthy, the owners of great estates, proprietors, or whatever name these possessors of lordly fortunes go by, ever say: "These things are mine and I will do with them as I like; I can, if I will, spend my money and my substance in sport, in banqueting, in dress, in luxury, in enjoyment, and no one has a right to question me about it." True, men can not legally hold you to account for doing so, in as much as the law recognizes in the owner the right to do as he

[1] "Ex quo ipsi discimus, non ipsi esse domini, sed potius alienarum villici facultatum."—ST. AMBROSIUS, in hunc locum.

pleases with his property, precisely because he is the owner; but God can demand a reckoning of you, and He will, since in regard to Him you are only administrators of the goods you possess. What answer will you make to Him when He says: "*Give an account of thy stewardship?*" You can conceal nothing from Him; nothing escapes His unerring judgment. You might have used in feeding the hungry and in clothing the naked what you have squandered in luxuries, in feasting, in reveling and in guilty pleasures, and of your abundance you might have given to the needy. And, my friends, if we would but regard ourselves as the administrators and dispensers of the Lord, and keep in mind the account which we shall have to render to Him of all these things, we should not see such lavish waste on the one hand or such want and destitution on the other.

And here let me point out a notable difference between the laws of God and the laws of man. Speaking generally, human law recognizes that the owner has the right even to destroy his property, though he should do so only from caprice. One may, if the whim takes him, set fire to his house or to his granary, while the poor about him are hungry and homeless; every one would condemn such a man as stupid or worse; they would execrate him, if you will, but the law could not punish him, because, rigorously speaking, he has not trespassed on the rights of others; but he would be condemned both by the natural and the divine law and he could not escape the judgment of God. Thus you see how the divine law, of which the Church is the depository and interpreter, carries

its authority beyond the confines of the human law, of which it is the support and to which it gives strength and efficacy.

Let us now go back to the parable. "*The steward was accused unto the rich man that he had wasted his goods.*" The case against him was clear. He lived in splendor, feasted sumptuously, spent with a lavish hand, and gave himself all the airs of a fine gentleman; it would have been necessary to close one's eyes not to see that his hands were deep in the pockets of his master; he was the talk of the neighborhood, and, as usually happens in such cases, some one, whether impelled by a sense of justice or inspired by envy, ill-will, or some other motive, went to the master and told him of the evil reports that were current concerning the steward: "*And the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.*" The master did what any one would have done to prevent his property from being squandered; he at once called the steward before him and with an air of stern severity, said: "*How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer.*"

My friends, the first and most natural punishment inflicted by God on those who misuse His blessings, is to withdraw the blessings themselves. And who can find fault with this? Who is the proprietor who would continue to entrust the administration of his property to a faithless steward or even to one who is suspected of being faithless? And not unfrequently he who abuses earthly blessings, loses them through his folly and excesses, God thus making him the instrument of his

own punishment. Here is a man once wealthy but now penniless; he led an idle, indolent, and wicked life, indulged in expensive and sinful dissipation, squandered his money on unworthy objects, and now he is reduced and it is a hard struggle with him to gain even the necessaries of life. Here is another, once young and full of life and strength; he fell little by little into intemperance in eating and drinking, and now he lies upon a bed of pain, stricken with an incurable disease. Here is a third, who once enjoyed a stainless reputation, which his reckless conduct has forever blasted; and here is still another, who once was blessed with all the joys of domestic peace, but now all is lost, because he could not conquer himself and because his children, following his example, have filled his home with discord and strife. Is it not true, my friends, that men are very frequently the instruments of their own punishment and that they deprive themselves of those temporary blessings, of the loss of which they querulously complain? Daily experience tells us that this is so, and the steward in the Gospel is an instance of it. The loss of his stewardship was not due to the harshness of his master but to his own dishonest practices and lawless life.

The steward on learning the intention of the master, fully realized the danger and gravity of his position; the loss of the office from which he derived his livelihood was inevitable. What was he to do? He collected his thoughts and, putting his head between his hands, began to reason with himself, saying: "*What shall I do, because the*

lord taketh away from me the stewardship? How am I to live? Shall I go out into the fields and till the soil as do those poor men, under the heat of a broiling sun? I am now well on in years and I have never done such work nor can I now. Shall I hold out my hands and ask the passers-by for alms? Shall I do this, I, who heretofore have lived in honor and affluence? For me it would be an intolerable disgrace. I shall do neither the one nor the other. *To dig, I am not able; to beg, I am ashamed.* And yet I must find some way out of my difficulty, some way to make provision for myself.'' One circumstance with regard to this steward should be carefully noted, namely, that he admits his transgression; he makes no attempt to cover it up or brazenly to deny it.

After having deliberately considered what in such straits it was best for him to do, an idea dawned upon him, which he at once seized and resolved to put into execution. He said: *''I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.''*

Observe, my friends, that this man admits to himself and to his own conscience that he has been faithless and has committed a theft; he does not even try to palliate it, neither does he show the least sign of repentence, nor does he, like the prodigal, generously say to himself as the prodigal did: *''I perish here with hunger; I will arise and I will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee.''* He might have cast himself at the feet of his master, confessed his fault, thrown himself upon

his charity and mercy and asked to be received as one of his servants; but he did nothing of the kind; he did not manifest the least sign of repentence, nor did he give the slightest token of reform and amendment; he was filled with the one thought of how wretched and helpless he would soon be.

Certainly, there is no harm in thinking of one's condition and in looking ahead and making honest provision for oneself and for one's bodily needs, but over and above the needs of the body there are the needs of the soul; and of the two the needs of the soul are incomparably the more important and should be first provided for. But this the steward in the Gospel did not do, and in this he has many imitators among Christians. They give free rein to their passions, they commit sins without number, and when in consequence they find themselves reduced to the most trying straits, ruined in fortune and name, and their bodily health undermined, they groan under the burden of temporal afflictions and use every effort to escape from them, but they never think of removing the causes of these manifold transgressions, of repenting of their sins, of detesting them and of being restored to the friendship of God. It is an incredible blindness. They wish to get rid of the effects, but they cling to the causes; they strive to escape the chastisement which God inflicts on sin, and yet they live in sin and love it.

And what scheme did the dishonest steward contrive? Here it is: "*Calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred*

barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill, and write eighty.''[1]

To the frauds already committed against his master the steward now adds another and a still graver one by giving the debtors their written obligations, and allowing them or rather urging them to alter these evidences of indebtedness. Both the steward and the debtors were accomplices to the forgery[2] and theft and both were acting in their own interest, the debtors to diminish their indebtedness and the steward to make for himself friends, who would receive him with kindness into their homes after he had been turned out by the master. In listening to the story of this plot contrived by the steward and the debtors to rob their common benefactor, we are shocked and indignant at such rascality, so skilfully and fraudulently perpetrated, and we have reason to be so. But, my friends, let us be candid. While we are protesting how honest we are in this day and generation, while we are panegyri-

[1]These measures correspond, according to the most accurate calculations, to the following: One hundred barrels of oil to three thousand eight hundred and eighty liters or eight hundred and fifty-three gallons, and a hundred quarters of wheat to six thousand seven hundred liters, or one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four gallons. See Bonghi, Life of Christ.

[2]Among the Hebrews the falsification of numbers was easy, because their numerals were letters. It should be noted that among Orientals astuteness is admired by the vulgar, and is not regarded as dishonest, and with them all business is astuteness. Among them lying and cheating and thefts do not excite that contempt which, at least externally, they excite among us; they have a morality of their own, and Renan says truly that among these people truth is something relative.

zing justice and good faith, singing their praises by word of mouth and in writing, in spite of our penal laws are frauds and impostures and forgeries, and consequent thefts of this sort, as uncommon among us as those who laud the virtue of their age would have us believe? I appeal to yourselves. How often do we hear of fraudulent contracts, of usurious and unjustifiable rates of interest, of promises violated, of obligations spurned, of forged signatures, of failures, which are not the results of fortuitous circumstances or of the ordinary risks of trade? And why all these deceptions and this dishonesty? In order to get wealthy rapidly, to live in luxury and splendor, to make a figure in the fashionable world, to be able to belong to clubs and to enjoy the expensive pleasures and dissipations of the wealthy and the idle. The dishonest steward in the Gospel and his accomplices in guilt, find many imitators in the Christian society of to-day and the accursed hunger for money, the daughter of the equally accursed hunger for pleasure, continues its portentous work of undermining and destroying public morals.

To return to the parable. Of course the proprietor learned of the fresh fraud that had been so cleverly perpetrated upon him by the steward, and, as is clear from the Gospel, he dismissed him; and here it is said, that the lord, that is Jesus Christ, commended the steward for his foresight: "*And the lord commended the unjust steward for as much as he had done wisely.*" But you will ask: How could Jesus praise a steward who was dishonest and who conceived a plot to

have the debtors commit an additional fraud? Could Jesus Christ approve and bless trickery and theft? *"The lord commended the unjust steward."* This is blasphemy. Do not be disturbed, my friends; Jesus Christ, the Man-God, could certainly not approve injustice; the very thought of it would be blasphemy. How, then, are the words: *"The lord commended the unjust steward,"* to be understood?

They are easily understood, and the explanation is not difficult. Jesus did not praise the deceit, the fraud, and the theft of the steward, this was impossible; but he praised the foresight, the readiness, the ability, and cleverness with which he made provision for himself against a coming day: *"The lord praised him for as much as he had done wisely."* So also when we hear of a shrewd piece of work by which our neighbor has been outwitted and defrauded, though the crime in itself may be an atrocious one, we say: "Well done! That is certainly a clever fellow, and one can not help admiring him." We do not admire or approve the cheating or the crime committed; we detest both, but we praise and admire the astuteness and ingenuity with which they were perpetrated, since these, taken by themselves and considered apart from the use made of them, are good and deserving of admiration, and it is only in this sense that Our Lord praised the unjust steward.

The divine Master goes on to make two applications of the parable and these are worthy of particular attention: *"For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of*

light." Who are the children of this world? They are undoubtedly men imbued with the principles and spirit of the world, the sinful, the vicious, and the depraved, and all who are slaves to their passions. Who are the children of light? They are necessarily the opposite of the children of darkness and in Biblical language they are designated as spiritual men, as believers, as those who have the light of faith. The unjust steward, the debtors, the forgers, and thieves are by Jesus Christ numbered among the children of this world, and this is a confirmation of the explanation just given, when I said that Jesus Christ did not praise the cheating and stealing of the steward and the debtors, but their foresight and worldly shrewdness, and hence the Evangelist calls the steward an *unjust steward,* a dishonest man, a cheat, at the same time praising his prudence in providing for himself against future need. Jesus says that bad men are often more far-seeing in laying their plans than are the virtuous, and daily experience furnishes many proofs of this truth. We see men of the world who are solely intent on accumulating wealth, on gaining offices and distinctions and on getting all possible pleasure out of life, and nothing else seems to have any interest for them. How many subtle artifices they employ to succeed, what labors they endure, what efforts they put forth, what sacrifices they make! They are restless, disturbed, never at peace day or night, and all this to gratify their passions and acquire the fleeting goods of this world, if indeed they merit the name of goods.

On the other hand, look at the children of light,

the believers and the righteous. They are intent on gaining the imperishable goods of heaven, on sanctifying their souls and serving God. Is it not true, my friends, to our shame be it said, that the children of darkness often toil harder to serve the world and the prince of the world than do the children of light to serve God? Is it not true that the latter are surpassed in zeal, courage, and activity by the former? Is it not true that the world is often better served by its votaries than is Jesus Christ by His disciples? This is the lament of Jesus Christ in the passage above. My friends, if we honestly examine ourselves we shall find that we have done more for the world and for the gratification of our passions, to which we owe nothing, than to please God, to whom we owe everything. This is a fact which when looked at in the light of conscience should shame and humiliate us.

The divine Master concludes the parable with these words, which contain the chief lesson He intends to convey: "*And I say to you: Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.*"

The unjust steward used his opportunity to make friends who might give him aid when he should have need of it; the Saviour tells us to do the same. Have you an abundance of wealth and of this world's goods? At times wealth and property are unjustly acquired; they are acquired by fraud, deception, usury, and illegal methods[1]

[1]Riches are very often the fruit of injustice, if not of the actual possessors, then of their fathers or ancestors, and hence are they

and therefore they are themselves said to be unjust; they are also said to be unjust because, although come by honestly, they are always, considering our human frailty, an incentive to sin; hence Our Lord bids us use our wealth for the gaining of Heaven by depositing it in the hands of the poor, and they, when our time comes, will receive us into everlasting dwellings, since God accepts as done to Him what is done for them.

But you will say: If our wealth is the fruit of injustice we should repair that injustice by restoring the ill-gotten goods to those to whom they belong, and not distribute them in alms among the poor. This is all true and precisely what should be done; but when it is not possible to restore what has been unjustly acquired to him to whom restitution should be made, as very frequently happens, then give to the poor; it will help to mitigate their sorrows and brighten their lives, and you will have them as advocates before the throne of God. The gist of the whole parable is this, that we gain heaven not alone by living as wayfarers on this earth, but by the use we make of the earth itself; that is, by making a good use of the goods or blessings of earth we shall merit the goods of heaven.[1]

called iniquitous. The words of St. Jerome are terrible; he says, *Omnis dives aut iniquus, aut iniqui hæres.* Epist. xv, ad Hedib. These words are pleasant to the socialist, and many like them can be found in St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, and other Fathers. They are oratorical, if you will, but not without a basis of truth.

[1]The *mammon of iniquity* is a Hebraism, equivalent to *iniquitous mammon.* The Greeks worshiped Pluto as the god of riches, and the Phenicians, Mammon.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XIX

BRETHREN: We should not covet evil things, as they also coveted. Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them: as it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day three-and-twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ: as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents. Neither do you murmur: as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them in figure: and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human: and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* x. 6-13.

YOU will have noticed that the Epistles read in the Mass on Sundays are nearly all taken from the Letters of St. Paul. And why is this, my friends? If I mistake not, the chief reasons for this usage in the sacred liturgy are the following: The Letters of St. Paul taken together would make a volume almost equal in size to one containing the Four Gospels, and much larger

than one containing the seven Letters that remain to us of St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude. It is not surprising, then, that the Letters of St. Paul, since they form so considerable a part of the New Testament, should furnish a larger number than the Letters of all the other apostles of the lessons read in the Mass; moreover it is to be noted that the dogmatic, and especially the moral teaching of Christ is admirably condensed in the Letters of St. Paul, and hence these are preferable to other parts of Scripture for the instruction and edification of the faithful.[1] These two reasons, not to mention others, will sufficiently account for the fact that the Epistles of the Mass, which are the subjects of our homilies, are nearly all taken from the Letters of St. Paul. And now let us go on to the commentary of the eight verses just read for you, contained in the tenth chapter of St. Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians.

In the preceding verses St. Paul says that he must chastise his body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when he has preached to others he himself should become a castaway. He justifies this fear, as regards himself and others, of becoming a castaway by the example of the people of Israel, who nearly all perished miserably in the desert before entering into the promised land; and here he takes occasion from what happened

[1]A great part of the Gospels is taken up with the facts of the life of Christ, while in the Epistles of St. Paul, except very rarely, no mention is made of them; instead, the doctrine of Christ, both dogmatic and moral, is set forth; and hence for this reason it may be said that in the Epistles we have a rich mine, equal, if not superior to the Gospels.

to the Hebrews in the desert, to draw a moral which he applies to the Christians. Remember, says the Apostle, that of the six hundred thousand Hebrews of the age of twenty years and upward, that went out from the land of Egypt, only two entered into the promised land; and the same may happen to us wayfarers, traveling toward heaven, the true land of promise.

"*Let us not covet evil things, as they also coveted,*" he says, continuing the comparison between the Hebrews and the Christians. The Hebrews in the desert longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt, longed for the time "*when they sat over the flesh-pots and ate bread,*" and, unmindful of the horrible slavery they had endured, began to murmur against God and against Moses, who had led them into that desert place. To desire the flesh-pots was not in itself a serious fault, but it was a serious fault and a grave crime to murmur against God, to rebel against Moses, to forget the countless benefits they had received, and to yearn again for the servitude from which they had been released. God punished that ungrateful and evil-minded people by sending a plague upon them, and many of them were stricken with death, and the place where they died was called the *Graves of Lust*.[1] Let us beware, says the Apostle, not to imitate those Hebrews, and thus shall we escape incurring the wrath of God and the danger of being excluded from heaven.

Men are ever the same, like children, fickle, easily seduced, and forgetful of benefits. The Hebrews should have retained a vivid memory of

[1] Num. xi. 34.

the horrors of their Egyptian slavery, of their intolerable labors and hardships, of the casting of their infants into the Nile by a barbarous tyrant, and of the prodigies wrought by Moses; but all these seemed forgotten. In a moment of discontent, irritability, and anger their thoughts went back to the leeks and flesh-pots of Egypt; they murmured against God, spoke openly against Moses, their liberator, threatened him and rose in rebellion against him. And is not this also what we frequently do? When we have been loosed from sin, do we not go back in thought and imagination to the old gratifications, do we not yearn for the old servitude, for the fetters of passion so long and so cheerfully borne; and is not the way of virtue rugged to us and the Christian life hard and trying? Fools that we are, we long to go back to the land of Egypt and we are willing to turn our backs on the land of promise to which God calls us.

"*Let us not covet evil things.*" The Hebrews, as is clear from the text, desired only the flesh-pots and yet their desire was a culpable one. The Apostle warns us Christians to beware of coveting anything evil: "*Let us not covet evil things.*" We see only what appears on the outside, and this only imperfectly, but God penetrates into the foldings of the heart and into the very springs of thought; He sees all, weighs all, measures all, and He can make no mistake.

My friends, how many desires well up from the depths of the heart, the one succeeding the other, keeping it in a ferment? They follow one another like the waves of the sea, leaving no trace

of their passing. It is not necessary that they manifest themselves in acts, that men see and number them; God sees them and keeps a record of them. Now what is the character of these desires, the offspring of our thoughts and our loves? Are they all good, upright, honest, or at least indifferent? Alas, if we are honest with ourselves we must confess that many of the desires that come forth from the depths of our souls are vicious, guilty, and such that were they known, I will not say to strangers, but to our best friends, would bring a blush of shame to our cheeks. Why, then, admit into our hearts, fondle, and caress desires which we would wish to hide from men, from our dearest friends, and which are known to God and will one day be revealed to all the world? Let us keep a watch over these desires; let us cherish those that are good and holy, and promptly cast out those that are wicked and dangerous, lest they defile our souls: "*Let us not covet evil things.*"

St. Paul continues the contrast, saying: "*Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them,*" namely, the Hebrews in the desert. Moses tells us that while he was on the mountain receiving the commandments the people made themselves a calf of gold, an idol of the Egyptians, adored it, offered sacrifices to it, and very likely, according to the custom of the Gentiles, ate of the meat offered to the idol, and began dancing about it. We should remember that those sacred dances of the Gentiles before their idols were orgies namelessly obscene and lascivious, and we can readily believe that such were those of the Hebrews before the golden calf. To what sort of idolatry does

St. Paul refer? Clearly to idolatry in the strict sense of that word, for this is implied in his reference to the idolatry of the Hebrews; nor need we be surprised that St. Paul thought it necessary to warn the faithful against the danger of idolatry. Many of the faithful to whom he was writing had been Gentiles and idolaters, and had only recently been converted. Considering their vicious habits and the fact that idolatry then held sway over the minds of all, from the king on the throne to the peasant in the cabin, the danger of a relapse was a serious one. History tells us that instances of apostasy were not rare, and that there were Christians who, after being baptized, either from fear of persecution, or from interest, or from other causes, returned to the worship of idols. The exhortation of St. Paul was, then, not out of place; on the contrary, it was opportune and necessary.

Among us in this age there is not the remotest danger of any one falling into the sin of ancient idolatry; that period of the greatest moral degradation of European peoples is past, never to return. But if the danger of idolatry, strictly so called, is past, the danger of another kind of idolatry, namely, that of an unbridled lust after the goods of this earth, to which honor and duty and conscience and God Himself are often sacrificed, is not passed; it endures and is more flourishing and widely diffused than in any former age. What does an idolater do? He takes a block of wood or a piece of metal, and, having fashioned it into a statue, he falls down and adores it and offers sacrifices to it, saying: "Thou art my

God!" What does a man do, who is a slave to an unbridled love of the things of this world? He heaps together gold and silver, or wealth in some form; he has a craving for office, for honors, and distinctions; he looks with lustful eyes upon an attractive form or face, and abjectly prostrating himself before these idols, says: "My heart and my love are yours; I live only for you; you are my God; to you I sacrifice all I am and have." Is not this a shameful and loathsome idolatry? Do not the mind and the heart and the soul adore a block of wood, a bit of metal, an empty honor, a vile passion? Do they not shamefully debase themselves? And that I do not in the least exaggerate, St. Paul bears me witness, who in another place calls covetousness or avarice "*a serving of idols,*" or idolatry. We detest idolatry as an atrocious crime and as the vilest degradation to which the human mind can descend, and so it is; but let us also have a horror of that other idolatry, by which we become worshipers of riches and honors and pleasure: "*Neither become ye idolaters as some of them.*" Lift up the mind and heart on high. Let us fix our thoughts on God, and with Him and in Him shall we be lifted up; let us adore Him only; the goods of this earth are scarcely worthy to be trodden under foot, and let us keep them always there.

St. Paul still goes on drawing a contrast between us and the children of Israel in the desert. He says: "*Neither let us commit fornication as some of them commit fornication.*" Moses relates in the Book of Numbers that a great many Hebrews gave themselves over to shameful sins with

the daughters of the Moabites, that by command of God they were frightfully punished, and that "*there fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*"[1] Such carnage shocks us and fills us with terror; but we should bear in mind that only by such tremendous lessons as this, was it possible to keep this people, stiffnecked and uncircumcised of heart and always ready to transgress, from going into sinful excesses; and even such lessons were at times inadequate. This frightful chastisement will give us some idea how shameful and wicked a sin fornication is. Far be from us, then, the Apostle says in effect, a crime which brought so terrific a vengeance upon the heads of the children of Israel: "*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication.*" Is this foul sin rare among Christians, among the children of the law of grace and of love? Great God, to the shame of the Christian name be it said, it is not rare; it is common, and in certain places and cities, so common that it passes without comment, and is a matter of boast. And should that sin be regarded as trifling, which the vengeance of God has so sternly visited and whose guilt was washed away with the blood of three and twenty thousand victims? True, those terrifying chastisements are not, through the mercy of God, visited upon us in our day; but do not fancy that this detestable sin always remains unpunished even here on this earth and under the Gospel Law. God so disposes things that the slaves of this shameful

[1]The Vulgate says that 23,000 were slain; according to the Hebrew account there were only 3,000. In any event it was a terrible chastisement.

vice punish themselves by their own hands. Are not discords, quarrels, and hatreds, lavish extravagance and the squandering of the most ample fortunes, duels and deeds of blood, the most loathsome diseases of mind and body, mental weakness and premature death, the bitter fruits of this sin? If we could only know the victims which this sin is reaping among us and number them one by one, we should stand aghast and be forced to confess that the hand of God is not less terrible now and among this generation than it was among the children of Israel. Then it was God Himself who directly smote a fornicating people; now the fornicators themselves are their own punishers and they experience in their sin a foretaste of that never ending pain which they are treasuring up for the life to come.

St. Paul goes on: *"Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted and perished by the serpents."* The Hebrew people in the desert began to speak against God and against Moses,[1] because they had neither bread nor water and their souls loathed their food. They broke forth into reproaches and blasphemies, and forgetful of the prodigies they had witnessed and the benefits they had received, they sorely tried God's patience: *"They tempted Him."* Whereupon the Lord sent among that ungrateful and rebellious people a great multitude of fiery serpents,[2] whose bite was

[1]Num. xxi. 5 seq.

[2]Holy Scripture calls them *burning* or *fiery* serpents; I think the word *burning* or *fiery* indicates the nature of the bite or of the poison; it produced great inflammation, and because the effect was like the effect of fire or of burning, those serpents were called fiery.

deadly and a large number of them perished miserably. Let what happened to them be a lesson to us: "*Let us not tempt Christ,*" that is, let us not doubt of His promises or of the truths He announced to us; let us not do as the Hebrews did, who every instant demanded miracles; let the word of Christ be sufficient for us and let us tranquilly rely on it. God gives us all human things by His providence, that is, by those ordinary laws which He has established and upon which the natural order rests. A miracle is an exception to those laws, a direct, and immediate interposition of God; and such an interposition ought not to be admitted, unless the evidence for it is sufficient to warrant us in admitting it; because the natural laws are the rule, and a miracle an exception, and an exception is admitted only when necessity and the natural reason force us to admit it. God can make an exception, or work a miracle, but He *will not* do so unless it is necessary. But when is it necessary? Of that He alone is the absolute judge and no one can force Him, since no creature may say to the Creator: "Thou shouldst do this or that," unless He has promised to do it, and promised to do it at such a time and in such a way. To wish that God should do a miracle and do it as we wish Him to do it, would be to ask Him to derogate from His laws at our bidding; it would be to tempt Him, to impose a law upon Him, and to show ourselves mistrustful of His promises and of the ordinary course of His providence. We may and ought to pray in our every need with full confidence and humility, abandoning ourselves with filial trust to His fatherly benevolence as to

the way and the time and the measure He may be pleased to hear us.

St. Paul continues: "*Neither do you murmur as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*" This is the last comparison St. Paul draws between the story of the Hebrew people and what may happen among the Christian people. The Hebrew people often murmured against God and against Moses, who was leading them in God's name. To which of these murmurings allusion is here made is not clear; it is certain that every time they murmured they were more or less severely punished and we think it not unreasonable to say that here the Sacred Text includes them all. Those murmurings of the Israelites against God, and against Moses, who was acting in His name, were in truth rather uprisings and seditions, which God sternly punished.

God alone is the source of authority and all authority, whether in the natural order, or in the supernatural, is derived from Him; men invested with it are His messengers and representatives, and hence to murmur against them, and much more to rise in revolt against them, is an offense against God Himself and a subversion of the order established by Him. It may happen that those clothed with authority, whether civil, paternal, or even ecclesiastical in its various grades, fail in their duty and shamefully abuse their power; we may then appeal to higher authority, show that we have been wronged and demand justice, always in the proper and regular way, but we may never be contumacious and rebellious; this the public interest and established order both

forbid. Those who rebelled against Moses in the desert were at once stricken by almighty God, and if in this life God does now visibly punish the insubordinate, they will not escape punishment in the life to come. Let us, then, my friends, respect all authority, no matter of what sort it be, and those clothed with authority, and let us respect them because of the excellence and dignity of the authority itself with which they are invested; for such is the will of God, and whosoever fails to do so will not escape chastisement from Him who said: *"He who despises you despises Me."*

Let us follow the text of the Apostle: *"Now all these things happened to them, that is, to the Hebrews, in figure, and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come,"* or upon us who have come last, in the final period of time. We are assured by the Apostle in these words that all things that happened to the Hebrews, as here narrated, were and are a figure of what takes place in the Church, and ought to be a lesson for us. As I said to you on another occasion, all the facts of the Old Testament are so many lessons from which we are to learn our duties, what we ought to believe, what we ought to do and what to avoid, and this is what is called the negative or the recondite sense of Scripture.

But is each and every fact recorded in the Old Testament a figure of the facts of the New? This would be saying too much, and St. Paul does not say without limitation that *all things,* but that *all these things,* to which I have referred, are figures of what was to happen under the New Covenant.[1]

[1]"Mihi sicuti multum errare videntur, qui nullas res gestas in

Having noted these four facts of the Old Covenant and drawn from them practical moral lessons for the faithful of Corinth, to whom he was writing, the Apostle goes on to make this general observation and to exhort them, saying: "*Wherefore he that thinks himself to stand let him take heed lest he fall.*" The human will is weak and unstable, ever changing, and, though we know that the aid of grace will never be wanting to him who asks for it, we are not sure that we shall correspond with it, and hence our perseverance in well-doing is known to God alone. We should therefore be distrustful of ourselves, fear for our own weakness and inconstancy, humble ourselves before God, and, strong in faith, pray earnestly; by these means we shall remain firm in the grace we have received.

We live in the world and the world is a battle-field in which war never ceases; to be free from temptations from within and from without is an impossibility. What, then, are we to do? "*Let no temptation take hold on you,*" writes St. Paul, "*but such as is human.*" What is meant here by a *human temptation?* I think St. Paul meant to exhort the faithful to flee from all temptations that could possibly be escaped and to resign themselves to those that are inevitable, manfully resisting them. There are temptations which we can foresee and avoid, and these, as the occasion

eo genere litterarum aliquid aliud, præter id quod eo modo gestæ sunt, significare arbitrantur; ita multum audere, qui prorsus ibi omnia significationibus allegoricis involuta esse contendunt." (St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei, lib. xvii, c. xv.) A weighty sentence this, which, while admitting a mystical sense, reprobates the excesses to which some go.

arises, we should anticipate and escape; but there are others, which in spite of all we can do, assail us, distress us, and are a perpetual torture to us, and these come from the world, from the flesh, and from the devil, and are called by St. Paul *human* temptations, that is, temptations inherent to our present condition and which come to us in the ordinary course of human existence. These God permits for His own high ends and for our good. When these human temptations come upon us and vex and worry us, what should we do, how should we proceed to regulate our conduct? First of all we should call to mind that "*God is faithful,*" that what He has promised He will certainly do; that He has promised to come to our aid and that we should not doubt that He will aid us according to our needs. Nay more; would any of us lay a burden on a servant or on a child so weighty that neither could bear up under it? Assuredly not, and should we do it we would be both unjust and cruel; now we are servants of God, or rather, His well-beloved children, and it would be a blasphemy even to think that He, the most just Judge and loving Father, would subject us to a trial or temptation beyond our strength. Be assured that He will never do it: "*God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.*" This truth is explicitly taught us by St. Paul and it is a truth so manifest that had we no warrant for it in Holy Scripture, reason would convince us of it. Let no one, then, ever say: "The temptation was too strong for me; I could not resist it." This is false, and an atrocious insult to God; it is to attribute to Him the cause of

our sin. God never commands what is impossible, and should He command what is impossible to our strength He gives us the strength to make it possible. This is a most comforting truth for us all, who day by day must engage in a hand-and-hand struggle with the enemy, and it takes from us all excuse for being overcome.

To the two consoling truths that "*God is faithful,*" and that "*He will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able,*" he adds a third, namely: that "*He will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it.*" While allowing temptation to assail us, God will give us grace to come victorious from the conflict, and, far from sustaining any injury thereby, we shall gain many and considerable advantages. Which, for instance? Those which the dauntless soldier gains who returns victorious from the field of battle. In fighting he constantly gains skill to engage every new enemy with more confident hope of success, and hence, as between a raw recruit and a veteran, the chances are decidedly in favor of the latter. We become proficient in any art by repeated acts, and constant practice in it gives us ease and perfection; so also do temptations bring out and mature the spiritual forces, develop strength and generosity, and encourage us to run more rapidly and cheerfully along the way of virtue and perfection; and therefore make us more confident in our power to resist future temptations: "*That you may be able to bear it.*"

Finally, temptations afford us an opportunity of gaining greater merit for Heaven, since every temptation overcome is a victory wrung from the

enemy, and every fresh victory gives the right to a new crown, as it is written: "*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he has been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him.*"

HOMILY XX

AT THAT time: When He drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the Temple.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xix. 41-47.

YOU will have noticed in listening to the reading of this Gospel that it contains two parts distinct the one from the other; in the first part, it is said that Jesus on seeing Jerusalem wept, and the words are recorded, words full of love and grief, which weeping He pronounced over the city; in the second part, we are told that He went into the Temple and drove out from it those who

were profaning it. We shall now meditate upon these two facts and draw from them some practical lessons for our edification.

The miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, wrought at the very gates of Jerusalem, in the presence of so many witnesses, had, because of the particular and noteworthy circumstances that accompanied it, profoundly stirred the public mind and kindled anew the flames of ferocious hatred in the hearts of the enemies of Jesus Christ. They took counsel and resolved at once to take His life and thus extinguish forever the new religion. Jesus knew all things, and as the hour for delivering Himself into the hands of His enemies had not yet come, He withdrew toward the desert to the distant hamlet of Ephraim, the sight of which can not now be precisely fixed. After some days, the time predetermined having now arrived, He set out toward Jerusalem together with His disciples, and arriving at Bethania, about two miles from the city, He, as is likely, went to the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. The Pasch was at hand, that Pasch on which Jesus was to offer Himself up as a victim; and six days before the Pasch He went from Bethania to Jerusalem, now filled with a multitude of pilgrims,[1] who had come up from every part of the Roman Empire to celebrate the feast. Riding on the humble beast which His disciples had provided for Him, He ascended the Mount of Olives, which is about half a mile from the city. The ascent to the Mount of Olives

[1]Writers, and among them Bonghi (Life of Jesus Christ), says that there were as many as three million pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem for the Pasch, many of whom lived in the open country, as was then and is still the custom in those Eastern countries.

from Bethania, on the east, is gradual and may be easily made, but the descent on the opposite side, to the west of the city, is, for one on horseback, very precipitous and must be accomplished by going round and round the mount. The mount even at present is clothed with olive orchards and dotted here and there with houses, a few mosques, and some splendid religious edifices, both Catholic and schismatic, and from its top a magnificent view may be had of Jerusalem. On the hill of Sion, immediately in front, the Tower of David stands out serene and majestic like a giant, and lower down one sees the cupola of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and lower still the mosque of Omar and the palace of King Herod or tower of Anthony. Jesus must have gone to the top of the Mount, and the spot is still pointed out where He halted and here there is now a chapel called *Dominus flevit,* or Jesus wept. From this point He looked down upon the city at His feet and a cloud of sorrow swept over His countenance. While those who accompanied Him made the hills and valleys below resound with their glad acclamations of *"Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,"* the gentle Saviour wept: *"Seeing the city, He wept over it."* It should be noted that the fact of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem is recorded only by St. Luke, and from the narrative it is clear that, while the people who accompanied Him shouted His praises, He was weeping. A wonderful contrast this, between the tears of Jesus and the triumphant acclamations of His followers; while they were jubilant, His heart was filled with

sadness and He wept tears of grief, for, from the words that follow, there can be no doubt that His were tears, not of joy but of heartrending distress: "*He wept over it.*"[1] He wept over the stubbornness, the blindness, the ingratitude, the perfidy of that guilty city, which had shut its eyes to His miracles, closed its ears against His words of truth, and spurned them; He wept over the horrible crime which, within a few days, it would consummate on His own person; and it may be that from where He stood He could see the spot on which He was to be nailed to the cross by its people; He wept over all this and there came to His mind the thought of the tremendous vengeance with which God would visit that doomed city. The tears that He shed were tears of love and sorrow, both equally intense, and the one the cause of the other.

The burning love of Jesus for the unfortunate city was the cause of His intense sorrow and of the bitter tears by which that sorrow was relieved. Jesus was God and man; as God He was the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer of all men; they were His brothers according to the flesh; they were all made in the image of God; as man He loved His nation with a peculiar love; the heart of that nation was Jerusalem, to which He had given unmistakable tokens of His love, by selecting it as the theater of His miracles and of His preaching. The rights and duties of nature are sacred, because they come immediately from God and anticipate even those of grace. And just as

[1]The Greek word in St. Luke means that he *sobbed—broke out into a flood of tears.*

Jesus, the Man-God, loved and should love His mother, St. Joseph, and His kinsfolk better than He did the rest of his countrymen, so also should He love Israel and Jerusalem better than any other nation or city. It was His fatherland and the obligation to love one's fatherland, says St. Thomas, is an extension of the obligation incumbent upon us to love our parents and family. In becoming man, the Son of God chose for Himself a mother and kinsfolk; so also did He, as was fitting, choose for Himself a fatherland, and who can doubt that He discharged toward it, and most perfectly, all the duties of a good son.

Love of our fatherland, of the country in which we were born, in whose bosom lie the mortal remains of all who were dear to us, and where likely some day our own will also lie, where is still to be seen the church in which we were baptized, and in which are enshrined all our tenderest and holiest memories, love of country, I say, is a part of our nature; it comes from God, the Author of nature, and it implies duties which we ought religiously to fulfil. Unfortunate, indeed, is he who does not love his native land; he commits an affront both against his nature and against his God. That this love of country, like the love of parents, and every other love, may be a true and an honest love, it must conform to the eternal and inviolable laws of justice.

Jesus tenderly loved His country, and He loved Jerusalem still more, because it had greater claims upon His love; and His weeping and sobbing at the sight of the city reveal the depth of that love, and reveal, too, how keenly the thought

of the frightful chastisements that threatened it, and the more frightful crimes that provoked those chastisements, affected Him.

It is easy to surmise the motives that caused Him to weep and sob on seeing Jerusalem; they are clear from the very nature of the events that had taken place and from all their accompanying circumstances; but to tears and sobbing He added words that clearly revealed His thoughts: *"If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes."* This cry broke forth from the profoundly afflicted heart of Jesus. He was disconsolate and without comfort, as is clear from His broken utterance more than from what He said.[1] His thought put into clearer words, might read thus: "O Jerusalem, if only thou didst know, as I know, even this very day, what thou oughtest to do to have peace, true peace, thou wouldst be saved. But alas, thou art obstinate and blind and wilt not learn and therefore art thou lost." And what should Jerusalem have known to be saved, which, because she was stubborn and obdurate, she would not know? It is hardly necessary to say. She had refused to acknowledge Him, the Messias, the promised Redeemer; she had obstinately and wilfully disowned Him and within five days she would nail Him to the cross. He had done everything to save

[1]The words uttered by Jesus as given in St. Luke are a monologue. When a man is under stress of a great sorrow and speaks to himself, he is silent about many things, because they can be inferred; others he just touches upon; his sentences are broken, fragmentary, jerky, and such they were in this monologue, the outburst of a soul harrowed with grief.

her; He had wrought miracles, He had held out promises, He had threatened, He had lovingly invited, but all in vain. Now the measure is full; instead of love she will receive justice, and the wretched city is already doomed. Jerusalem, upon which He is looking down, which He had loved so tenderly, in which were gathered up all the glories of His nation and of His native country, that Jerusalem is irrevocably lost, her sentence is pronounced, and Jesus, bowed down under the weight of His sorrow, weeps and sobs. It is one of the most affecting scenes in all the Gospels and gives us a wonderful insight into the heart of Jesus.

The Fathers see in Jerusalem a figure of every Christian soul that is deaf to the promptings of grace and to the voice of God calling it to repentance. My friends, how many souls there are over whom Jesus weeps bitter tears! He has made them His own in Baptism; He has flooded them with His grace; He has brought them to a knowledge of His eternal truths; He has fed them with His own body and blood; He has loved them as the trophies of His conquest, as the price of His blood, as the most dear daughters of His heart. And they? What have they done? They have departed from Him, they have brutally turned their backs upon Him, they have requited His love and His favors with the blackest ingratitude; they have heaped sin upon sin, iniquity upon iniquity; they have made a compact with His enemies, they have spurned His teaching, they have blasphemed His name, they have polluted the heart, that temple consecrated to Him alone, and that pollution has remained for months and years and lustrums.

Poor souls! Jesus looks upon you with love and unutterable sadness; He sees you dancing on the brink of an abyss and He weeps over you as He wept over the fated city of Jerusalem and repeats the same lament: *"If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes."* May the cry and the groan of sorrow that well up from the heart of Jesus at the sight of those blind and ungrateful souls, not remain barren and unproductive. May none of those unhappy souls renew in itself the terrible story of Jerusalem.[1]

After weeping over the obstinacy of Jerusalem and giving vent to His grief because of the moral condition of that ill-fated city, Jesus looks away into the future, as clear to Him as the present; He sees the frightful catastrophe that within forty years will come upon it, blotting it out from the face of the earth and scattering its children to the four winds of heaven; He sees the unspeakable horrors of the siege, of those assaults, of that awful slaughter, and He sketches it all in two verses, which read like a history, rather than a prophecy. These are His words: *"For the day shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."* My friends, it is worth while to consider every detail of this memorable prophecy.

[1]See the thirty-ninth homily of St. Gregory the Great, where he applies to a sinful soul the words addressed by Christ to Jerusalem.

And first of all we know that the evils of the present life are not always a retribution for sin. We frequently see the good and holy overwhelmed with sorrow and visited with every manner of evil; look at Jesus Christ Himself, and the Blessed Virgin, look at the apostles, the martyrs, and saints of every age; what sufferings in material things, in body, in name, and in soul did they not endure? Look at their enemies, their barbarous persecutors; they are rich, and honored, and, humanly speaking, happy. This is an awe-inspiring problem, and a scandal for many, who see virtue despised and vice triumphant. Let us, then, guard against hasty judgments and against saying: "Such and such persons are grievously stricken with all manner of afflictions; they must therefore be great sinners and merit their chastisements." On the contrary, such and such others are signally prosperous; they are therefore virtuous and God blesses them. This way of judging is wholly fallacious, and Jesus Christ Himself tells us in the Gospel that if we will be His disciples we must expect to be treated as He was treated. But while misfortune and temporal evils are not always to be regarded as punishments inflicted by God on sin, there are instances of which this can be safely said, because there are reasons that prove this to a demonstration. That of Jerusalem is one such of which there can be no doubt. The tremendous disaster that came upon that city and the whole Hebrew nation can not be regarded as other than a most just judgment of God upon their crimes, because Jesus Christ Himself says so in so many words. "*And all these evils shall come upon thee,*"

He says, "*Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.*"

This prophecy of Christ was uttered forty years before its fulfilment; it was recorded in their respective Gospels by St. Matthew about eight years, by St. Mark about fifteen years, and by St. Luke about twenty years after the ascension of Christ; it is attested by history as beyond all question, and so also is it attested by the fact that the Christians in Jerusalem knew of it, and profiting by this knowledge, they all saved themselves by fleeing from the city, as Christ had commanded them to do: "*And when you shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place and the armies of the enemies casting a trench about thee, flee to the mountains. Behold I have told you beforehand. He who reads let him understand.*" This is one of the most splendid and best attested prophecies in the Gospels; first, because it was made and recorded in explicit terms before the event took place; and next, because the facts are so numerous, so complex, and so detailed, and all dependent upon the action of the free will of men, that they could not possibly have been foreseen except by the mind of God; and finally because they were all exactly fulfilled in every particular. We have among others the testimony of Josephus Flavius,[1] a witness beyond all exception, that this prophecy was completely fulfilled. In the beginning of the war between the Romans and the He-

[1]Josephus Flavius, or Josephus the Hebrew, in his work De Bello Judaico, bk. c. describes the phases of this war of extermination. Josephus, while at heart always a Hebrew, still leaves the impression that he had been so far influenced by Greek and Roman ideas as to apply to Vespasian some of the prophecies of

brews he fought gallantly on the side of his countrymen, taking part in many engagements. He was subsequently taken prisoner and remained in the Roman camp, doing all he could to aid his countrymen. To him we are indebted for the most interesting particulars concerning this terrible struggle, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of all the surviving Hebrews. The Romans under the leadership of Titus, the son of Vespasian, in the incredibly short space of three days built a wall twenty-five feet high around the city: "*And thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round and straiten thee on every side.*" The prophecy of Christ was marvelously precise. The city was crowded with people who had come from all the country round seeking its protection as a last refuge, and who fought desperately. When there was a lull in the fighting with the enemy outside the walls, the besieged began fighting among themselves within, and pursued one another even into the sacred precincts of the Temple. To the horrors of war were added the pangs of famine, and a mother to assuage the rage of hunger killed her own babe and ate its flesh. Many, who were starving and who were unable longer to endure the paroxysms of hunger and the horrors of intestine strife and carnage, fled to the Roman camps. The Roman soldiers, thinking that those who fled from the city carried their treasure with

the Bible. The ferocious obstinacy of the Jews in their great struggle against the Romans must be in great part ascribed to the assurances of false prophets, who professing to speak in God's name, foretold the coming of the Messias and of His complete victory over His enemies.

them and that they had swallowed their gold to conceal it, ripped them open and examined their smoking entrails in the hope of getting possession of it. In their fury at not finding it, they crucified their victims, and in a short time the entire city was encircled with a forest of the crucified. After a long and sanguinary siege the city was taken by assault, and the Hebrews, growing still more furious, withdrew into the Temple and defended themselves with the courage of despair. A Roman soldier applied a brand to the Temple and in a few minutes that marvel of beauty was enveloped in flames. At sight of their burning Temple the Hebrews gathered in it, and conscious that all was lost, turned their arms against one another in deadly strife, and many of them leaped into the flames. There perished in that war, which has no parallel, more than a million Hebrews, and some hundreds of thousands were led away into slavery and sold for a few pence each. And thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Christ. The Temple was burned and destroyed, the city was dismantled, and the entire nation was scattered to the four quarters of the earth "*because they did not know the time of their visitation.*" God is merciful, but He is also just. That people, which had repulsed the true Messias and put Him to death, trusted false messiases, who promised them victory over the Romans and freedom, and who drove them to rebellion and to war, and thus the Hebrews drew down upon themselves the vengeance of God.

And now let us go back to the Gospel: "*And entering into the Temple He began to cast out*

them that sold therein and them that bought, saying to them: My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.'' Jesus accompanied by the applauding crowd went on until He came near the Temple, but He did not enter it; He went back to Bethania and, as I think, at once withdrew to the hospitable home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. On the following day, which would coincide with our Monday in Holy Week, He went back to Jerusalem and straight to the Temple. He found the porches and the porticos filled with sellers and buyers of articles pertaining to the worship and to the sacrifices to be offered, and there were also money-changers who made enormous profits.[1] All these Jesus peremptorily drove out as profaners of the Temple. Jesus twice drove out these profaners from the Temple; once, when at the beginning of His public life He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pasch, as is mentioned by St. John;[2] and a second time, at the close of His public life, three days before His passion, as is mentioned by the other three Evangelists. Thus He began and ended His preaching in Jerusalem with the same act of zeal for the honor of the house of God, wishing thus to make plain that the one supreme purpose of His mission

[1]Every Hebrew was obliged to pay to the Temple a yearly tax of half a siclus, or about fifteen cents. It happened that many Hebrews, especially those who came from the Greek and Roman provinces, had only Greek and Roman or other foreign money, which was not received at the treasury of the Temple, because it was profane and bore upon it pagan symbols. This they had to exchange, and this is why there were money-changers, who reaped enormous profits from their traffic. It was most likely to this breed in particular that Jesus addressed the rebuke: *"You have made My house a den of thieves."*

[2]xi. 14-17.

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was the glory of His Father. In driving out from the porches and porticos of the Temple all that rabble, He uttered these words: "*My house is the house of prayer.*" What a lesson for us. If even the appendages of the Temple of old, the porches and porticos, were called "*a house of prayer,*" what shall we say of our churches, of which the Jewish Temple was but a faint figure? Our churches then are eminently houses of prayer, and hence no place for talking, or for meeting friends, no place to come to see or be seen, or to display fashions and fine clothes, or to satisfy the curiosity of others, or to indulge our own: "*The house of God is the house of prayer.*" Let us go there, then, to pray, to give thanks, to adore God, to hear His word, to receive the sacraments and the graces they convey; in a word, let us go there and abide there, as it is becoming to go and abide in the house of God and the house of prayer.

"*And He was teaching daily in the Temple.*" These are the last words of the Gospel. The Monday after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the Tuesday and Wednesday preceding His passion, which began Thursday evening, Jesus spent teaching in the Temple, each evening returning to Bethania and coming again in the morning to continue His work. When we reflect that Jesus knew everything with the absolute certainty which divine knowledge gives; that He counted the hours which yet remained to Him and saw as in a vision the horrible tragedy shortly to be consummated in His passion; that He saw about Him in the Temple His implacable enemies who had determined to have His life; when we

reflect on all this, and then look upon Jesus there, wholly forgetful of Himself, continuing His sacred mission up to the very last moment, teaching the people, comforting His beloved disciples, using every means to have the truth enter the minds and hearts of His enemies, we are forced to admire His heroic courage, His tireless zeal, His infinite charity, and to exclaim: "O Jesus, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world!"

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XXI

BRETHREN: You know that when you were heathens, you went to dumb idols, according as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit: and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit: to another, the grace of healing, in one Spirit: to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to another diverse kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of speeches. But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* xii. 2-11.

THE scope of the first Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, a portion of which you have just heard, is manifold, as is clear to one reading it only superficially. His purpose is to remove the dissensions that disturbed the Church, to exhort

them to lay aside their pretensions to superior knowledge and to recognize in their sacred ministers Him who sent them. He uses his authority to cut off from the Church the man guilty of incest; He lays down rules by which to guide them in regard to the use of meat offered to idols; he sets forth the teaching of Christ with regard to marriage and virginity; and he gives directions as to how they are to celebrate their love-feasts and to receive the Blessed Eucharist. The extraordinary gifts which Christ had promised were very frequent in the primitive Church. To forestall the dangers and the confusion to which these gifts might give occasion in the Church, the Apostle reminds them of the teaching of the Church in regard to them and then lays down practical rules to be observed in their use. In the Epistle that I am about to explain he sets forth the Catholic doctrine concerning all celestial gifts, and it will be worth your while to listen attentively to it.

God the Father, says St. James, is the inexhaustible fountain of all gifts, whether of the natural or of the supernatural order. The gifts of God that belong to the supernatural order are usually divided into two classes; to the first class belong the more excellent gifts which make us acceptable to God, constitute us in His friendship, give us the privilege of sonship, and render us participants of His very nature. Such is the sanctifying grace of God. To the second class of supernatural gifts belong those which do not properly constitute us in God's friendship, but which may lead us on to Him, and which may be

found, and as a matter of fact are found, even in sinners. Thus one may have the gift of prophecy, or of doing miracles and so on, and yet live in sin and be lost. No one can merit these supernatural gifts; God gives them to whom He will, according to the counsels of His wisdom, and their direct purpose is not the good of him who receives them, but of others. Thus the chief purpose of the priestly power is the saving of souls, and it may exist in and be validly exercised by one who is unworthy and who lives a life of sin and scandal. St. Paul, in the passage I am about to explain, speaks of supernatural gifts of the second class, at that time quite common, because they were intended to diffuse and establish the faith and the religion which was then just in the beginning of its growth.

The Apostle was writing to the Corinthians, many of whom had been Pagans, and after saying to them that "*concerning spiritual gifts he would not have them ignorant,*" he goes on: "*You know that when you were heathens you went to dumb idols, according as you were led.*" By a very natural transition St. Paul contrasts the present state of his neophytes with that in which they were but a little while before, with the evident purpose of leading them to realize the vast benefit they had received. He says in effect to them: "You can not but remember that only a few years back you were idolaters and adored dumb statues, to whose shrines you were led as sheep are led. You are beings endowed with reason and free will and yet you paid homage to idols, mute and deaf and lifeless. What a shame to have fallen so low!

But now you know God, the true God, a pure spirit, and Him only you adore, the unfailing source of every good, and hence you are now able to appreciate the inestimable worth of His gifts; and you know how to use them for your sanctification.

"*Wherefore,*" he goes on, "*I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus.*" To cry anathema means to *curse,* or to *blaspheme,* or to *execrate;* it is an expression peculiar to the Hebrews. "Would you know," he says, "who has the spirit of God and possesses the truth? Would you know the true teachers and how to distinguish them from the false and from impostors? Let this be a rule and test for you. Whosoever has a true belief in Jesus Christ, acknowledges Him, confesses that He is the Saviour, as He truly is: whosoever honors Him and loves Him, such a one has the spirit of God, and abides in the truth; you may safely listen to him and follow him." In those early times many false teachers arose and taught perverse doctrine; some said that Christ was only man and not God; others that He had not a real body but an apparent one, and hence that His sufferings and death were only apparent; and others again taught a variety of errors concerning Him. Hence, St. Paul says, that whosoever errs with regard to Jesus Christ, blasphemes Him, and bear in mind, he adds, that such do not speak by His Spirit and you must shun them. This same test and criterion was repeatedly given forty years later by St. Ignatius Martyr, in his magnificent letters, which seem to speak with the voice of St.

Paul, whose disciple most likely the holy martyr was.

"*On the contrary,*" he adds, "*no man can say the Lord Jesus Christ but by the Holy Ghost.*" In other words: Whosoever acknowledges Jesus Christ as his Lord, confesses Him and blesses Him, such a one has His Spirit and him you should recognize as His true disciple.[1] St. Paul here states a most important truth, namely, that no one, no matter how gifted and learned he may be, can without the grace of God and the assistance of the Holy Ghost, believe and hope in Jesus Christ, as he must believe and hope in Him, and he can not even call upon His name to save him. Can one see without eyes, or hear without ears? Can one argue without a reason, or resolve without a will? Assuredly not; similarly, without the grace of God, which illuminates the mind, stimulates and strengthens the will, not only can we not believe in, or hope in, or love God, but we can not even do the least act or have the faintest thought. that will lead us to Him and render us acceptable. In a word, without the aid of divine grace we can do, not little or much toward our salvation, but nothing at all, absolutely nothing. We can not even pronounce the name of Jesus Christ or invoke it, as it should be invoked: "*No man can say*

[1]Some think, and not without reason, that this double test given by St. Paul for detecting false teachers and distinguishing them from those inspired of God, ought to be understood as applying to those who had the gift of tongues and the other gifts of which he speaks in the sequel. The test of the Apostle may be expressed in these terms: Do those who, seemingly carried out of themselves, speak in strange tongues, etc., say aught against Jesus Christ? If so, no further proof is needed; they are impostors. Do they speak the truth of Jesus Christ? If so, theirs is the gift of God; listen to them.

the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost.'' Is not this a reason to humble ourselves before God, to acknowledge the absolute necessity of His grace, and to crave it every instant!

All goods and graces come from God; and without Him we have nothing and can do nothing. This is a truth of faith. *''Now there are diversities of graces but the same Spirit.''* The graces spoken of here are those that are said to be freely given, *gratis data,* such as the gift of miracles, of prophecy, of the sacred ministry, and the like; they are many and various, and further on they are distinctly named, but the cause, or the principle that produces them all is one and the same, namely the Holy Ghost. Although these gifts come equally from the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, they are especially attributed to the Holy Ghost, because He is the substantial love of the Father and of the Son, and they are a fruit or a consequence of the love of God for us.

''And there are diversities of ministries but the same Lord.'' Here the word *ministries* means the different offices or services in the Church, as for example, the office of the diaconate, of the priesthood, and of the episcopacy; they are indeed diverse, but one and the same. Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church, instituted them all.

''And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all.'' By the word *operations* St. Paul here indicates the power, or the force, or the efficacy, by which the divers ministries or agencies produce their several effects, but the principle or the source from which all those operations come is always God, and more

properly God the Father, who is the Principle without a principle of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. God works all in all things: "*Who worketh all in all.*" Lest this expression should be taken in a wrong sense an explanation is necessary.

Without doubt all things that exist, whether in the *natural* or the *supernatural order,* have their origin in God; they are effects of divine action: "Who worketh all." But does God also work, or produce, the effects that come from or through secondary causes? Fire *burns,* light *illuminates,* water *cleanses,* a tree *brings forth* fruit. Are these effects produced by God Himself? Fire *burns* of itself, light *illuminates* of itself, water *cleanses* of itself, a tree *brings forth* fruit of itself. But how do all these things produce these effects? Whence do they get the force to produce them? They do as they do, because such is their nature, and they could not do otherwise than they do; but the force by which they produce the effects that we see, comes originally from God alone, who created them; and hence we can say that it is God who works through them, and works all in each of them. Therefore it is most true to say that God burns with fire, illuminates with light, quenches our thirst with water, nourishes us with the fruit of trees, and clothes us with the wool of sheep: "*God worketh all in all.*" All the services that we receive every instant from creatures round about us, we really receive from God, since they do only as God the Creator wills them to do; they are the faithful and unfailing executors of His law and of His will.

The phrases that we so frequently hear from the

lips of a believing people, such as: "God has given us rain; God gives us the warmth of the sun; God has given us an abundant harvest; God has sent us this drought," and so on, is the language of truth, and those scientific men who find fault with such expressions as erroneous, are themselves in error. The plain people see and recognize the First Cause in all the phenomena of nature, and to it they ascribe them, without denying the secondary causes; scientific men take no notice of the First Cause, never reaching out beyond secondary causes. They reason well as far as they go, but they would reason better if, when it is fitting and necessary, they would go on from secondary causes to the First Cause; and, on the other hand, the plain people should, while recognizing the First Cause, recognize also the secondary or immediate causes; and if they fail to do so, they should not be too harshly judged, since very often they know nothing of the laws of natural phenomena. Still, withal, their language is true and it is the language of wisdom.

But there are also creatures endowed with reason and will; such are men and angels; they also work or act according to their nature. But how? Certainly in a way quite different from that according to which irrational creatures operate. Rational creatures act freely; they can do or not do; they can do in this way or that, and God does not force them; He respects the liberty He has given them; but the power to do what they do, be it good or evil, from whom do they receive it? They all and always receive it from God and from Him only, and hence it is right to say that in them

severally and singly He does all: *"Who worketh all in all."* He does not and He can not work evil, for this He does not will and can not, but even the power by which man does evil comes from God. It is therefore true that in every order of beings everything is the gift of God and that in everything He worketh all. God is one, and in His most simple unity He produces an endless variety of effects; the gifts are most diverse, and yet the spirit whence they came is one.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem in one of his catechetical instructions gives a charming illustration of this: "You see water; it is only one and it is always the same and colorless; let it spread over a meadow and irrigate it and everywhere flowers spring up, each differing from the other in color and fragrance. So also is it with the grace of the Holy Spirit; it is one and only one in itself, and yet, participated of in different measure, it produces a variety of effects, and hence the words of the Apostle are true: *There are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all."*

St. Paul now passes on to the particular gifts which God gives for the benefit of His Church: *"And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit";* which means that the end or purpose of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, of the gifts through which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself, as the sun manifests itself through its rays, is the good of the Church. And so it is in fact, for *"to one by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom,"* that is to say, the Holy Spirit gives to one the gift of explaining the highest mysteries

of the teaching of the Gospel, of tasting and by word of mouth making others taste the most sublime truths, making them realize their height and depth, their length and breadth, as the Apostle says elsewhere: *"To one there is given the words of knowledge according to the same Spirit."*

We may simply know truths, and our knowledge of them may be precise; but again we may know them in such a way as to love their beauty, to relish them with the palate of the soul, and to make them the rule of our lives. The first sort of knowledge is the gift of science, the second is the gift of wisdom. It is needless to say that the gift of wisdom is a higher gift than the gift of knowledge. A theologian and a philosopher may have an exact knowledge of the truths of faith, he may be able to explain them and to demonstrate them, and yet he may not practise them. St. Francis of Assisi, who spent whole nights meditating on these words: "My God, Thou are everything to me," delighted in contemplating truth; he possessed the gift of wisdom. Science or knowledge is light indeed, but it is a cold light; wisdom is also light, but it is a light that diffuses a genial warmth and the heat of life through every fiber of our soul and inspires us to love and practise truth.

Let us follow the Apostle in his long enumeration of the heavenly gifts. *"To another is given faith in the same Spirit."* Jesus Christ on one occasion said to His apostles: *"If you have faith you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence thither, and it shall remove."* And again:

"And you might say to this mulberry tree: Be thou rooted up and transplanted into the sea, and it would obey you." Jesus Christ speaks of the faith that is potent to work miracles, and not of the ordinary faith, commonly known as theological. It is a gift by no means necessary to salvation, and it is granted only for the working of miracles. *"And to another is given the grace of healing, in one spirit."* Jesus Christ and the apostles very frequently cast out the most obstinate diseases and restored those afflicted with them to perfect health by a word, a sign, a prayer, and by the shadow of their persons. This gift of healing the sick was very common in the primitive Church, and hence it is here recorded by St. Paul, who adds: *"To another is given the working of miracles."* In the preceding clause St. Paul refers particularly to the healing of the sick, but here he speaks generally of the larger gift of miracles: *"To another the working of miracles,"* which is a more ample gift than that of healing, since it includes any miracle whatever. *"To another is given prophecy."* I spoke on another occasion of the many distinct meanings which the word "prophecy" bears in Holy Writ, the chief of which are these two. Sometimes it means the knowing and foretelling of future events, which can not possibly be known by the ordinary powers of man, and this is the proper meaning of the word and the one it most usually bears. The other meaning simply implies that one is a preacher of divine truth, and in this sense prophet, preacher, and apostle, mean the same thing. In the above phrase the word "prophet" means precisely the

gift of publicly teaching the truths of faith, and of clearly and intelligibly interpreting the sense of Scripture.

"*To another,*" St. Paul continues, "*is given the discernment of spirits.*" What sort of gift is this, my friends? Whatever goes on down in the depths of our souls, the thoughts that come into the mind, the affections and the desires that spring up in the heart, are known to God alone; the demons, even the angels, without a special illumination from God, can not penetrate into the inmost recesses of our souls and read what goes on there. They can, as we men can, only much better than we, because they are endowed with greater acuteness, infer from our external acts what our thoughts and desires may be, but this knowledge is only conjectural and by no means certain and absolute. To know with certainty another's secret thoughts and read the book of his conscience belongs to God alone and to those men whom He enlightens with His light; and this is a gift wholly supernatural, and one quite common in the beginning of the Church.

"*To another,*" St. Paul goes on, "*is given diverse kinds of tongues.*" No one can speak a tongue he does not know; this is clear; and if one does speak in a tongue unknown to him, it must be inferred that he does so by divine power and that it is a gift from on high. This prodigy took place on Pentecost day publicly in the very streets of Jerusalem, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles. The apostles preached the Gospel in their own tongue, of which those who heard them, being ignorant, cried out in amazement: "*How*

have we heard, every man, our own tongue wherein we were born?" This miracle has often been repeated, and of this we have indubitable proof in the preaching of St. Francis Xavier and others. In apostolic times the gift of speaking in unknown tongues was not uncommon, and St. Paul tells us of it not only here but in other passages of his writings.

While some spoke in strange tongues and showed that they possessed a divine power, others, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, interpreted their meaning, and hence St. Paul adds: *"To another is given the interpretation of speeches."* To speak offhand in a language wholly unknown to the speaker, in the midst of a gathering of the faithful, while it would clearly demonstrate that the speaker was acting under divine impulse, and while it would be a proof of the truth of the Faith, still the words would not enlighten the minds of those who heard the strange sounds, but could not make out their meaning. His hearers would be amazed, but would understand nothing; and minds are illuminated only by the light of truth. And as the knowing of truth is the important thing, and not the hearing of unknown words, even from men talking under divine impulse, God to this marvel added another, and to one of the assembled faithful He gave the gift of interpreting those strange tongues and of explaining the meaning of the words uttered, so that those present might gain from them profit and edification.[1]

[1]St. Paul gives us to understand that some had this gift of tongues in such a way that it seemed an ordinary gift in their

"But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He wills." There are twelve separate gifts enumerated here by St. Paul, the distinct purpose of which is to prove the divinity of the Faith, to confirm it in the minds of men, and to help speedily to propagate it; but they were not of themselves intended to sanctify either those who possessed them or those who witnessed their exercise. Those gifts have never ceased in the Church and never will cease, but they are certainly now more rare than in the early age of the Church, because there is less need of them; and while they were most splendid proofs of the divine origin of the Christian religion, others equally splendid have replaced them.[1] All those majestic and varied gifts came from the same source; they came from God, the Supreme Cause of all things, from God who gives to whom He wills, as He wills, when He wills, and as much as He wills, for no one may say to Him that he has a right to His gifts. There is only one reason for participating of those gifts and that is the sovereign will of the sovereign Giver.

My friends, God disposes of all things in number, weight, and measure, and, while He is not lavish in what is superfluous, He is never wanting

case, and in consequence this created confusion in the gatherings of the faithful. Hence he directed that, if there was no one present who understood and could interpret these speeches, he who had the gift "*should hold his peace in the Church, and speak to himself and to God*" (xiv. 27 et seq.).

[1]When the apostles began to preach the Gospel miracles were a necessity, and they were therefore quite frequent; later on the propagation of the Church and her preservation were themselves an abiding miracle; and the fulfillment of the prophecies, to which all were witnesses, could stand in lieu of all miracles.

in what is necessary. In announcing the Gospel the apostles were obliged to prove its truth and divine origin to Jew and Gentile, and how could they do this unless by miracles which would startle those rude, ignorant people, so long slaves to immemorial superstitions? They were teaching and pleading with them to embrace a doctrine that had for its author one who had lived in the utmost poverty and who had died upon the cross; a doctrine that imposed inscrutable mysteries on the reason and made inflexible war on all the passions; and a doctrine that was proposed to them by common fishermen, by men who were despised and destitute of culture and authority. How could they get men to believe such teaching and to hold it firmly without an irrefragable and an irresistible proof such as miracles furnish? And miracles were wrought; the apostles and disciples scattered them as they went along; solemn miracles, indubitable, and almost continuous, as St. Paul in this Letter and the Acts of the Apostles attest. And thus was the Church established. Once the Church was established the need of miracles, if not wholly, in great measure ceased, and this is why miracles became less frequent as time went on. To us, miracles are not necessary to a belief in our holy religion; to us it suffices to have a certain knowledge of those that accompanied its going forth into the world; to us it suffices to see the fulfilling of the prophecies going on under our eyes, the force of which increases day by day; to us the very sight of that Church, unarmed, and assailed in every age, diffusing the light of truth about her wherever she is set up and con-

ferring upon mankind an uninterrupted series of blessings of every kind, suffices to prove beyond all shadow of doubt that she is not the product of man but the creation of God.

One more observation and I have done. Miracles are facts, visible and certain, which attest the presence of God; they are His voice resounding through the world, the immediate work of His hands; and hence all have the greatest desire to see them and to touch them. What would not people do to witness a miracle? The fact alone or the rumor that a miracle has taken place is enough to set them all in a ferment, to impel them to set out on long journeys, to fill them with joy or fear, to impose upon them great sacrifices. Yes, miracles are great events, and to witness one is well worth any sacrifice or fatigue; but, says St. Paul, "I can tell you of things that are still greater, of gifts incomparably more excellent, which it is within your power to obtain: *Be zealous for the better gifts, and I show unto you yet a more excellent way.*" Let me suppose, St. Paul says in effect, that any one of you can speak and understand all the languages of the earth, that he can read the secrets of all hearts, that with a word he can heal all infirmities, that he can know all future events, and recall the dead to life. What power this would be! What glory it would bring him! And how happy it would make him! Now I say to you that whosoever of you has living faith in his heart; whosoever of you is charitable, and practises humility, mortification, and obedience; whosoever of you, in short, has the virtues that befit a Christian and that should be his adorn-

ment, is far and away superior to him who has the power to work the most stupendous miracles. And why? Because one possessing this stupendous power, glorious as it is, might yet fall miserably and lose his soul; while he who is virtuous is dear to God and is sure to be saved. A poor old woman, pious and virtuous in the sight of God, is far greater and incomparably better off than the worker of the most astounding miracles, and hence it is written of St. John Baptist that a greater was not born of woman, though he never wrought a miracle.[1]

HOMILY XXII

At that time: To some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, He spoke also this parable: Two men went up into the Temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God! I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers: as also is this Publican; I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven: but struck his breast, saying: O God! be merciful to me a sinner! I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled;

[1]These words of the Gospel do not mean, as some think, that the Precursor was really the greatest saint that was ever upon earth; they mean only that John Baptist, by reason of his office, was the greatest of prophets.

and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xviii. 9-14.

THIS is the Gospel of the present Sunday, the tenth after Pentecost. The subject of it is the well known one of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer. Jesus Christ spoke the parable in Jerusalem toward the end of His mission, and possibly on one of the four last days of His life. The Pharisee and the Publican or tax-gatherer are so often mentioned in the Gospel, that it may be well to say a few words about them in order the better to understand the present parable.

The word Pharisee in our language is equivalent to *separatist* or *partisan*. The Pharisees were a powerful sect composed for the most part of laymen. The origin of the sect dates back a hundred and sixty years before Christ, when the Jewish people were in rebellion against the King of Syria, who tyrannized over them, and under the leadership of the Machabees, or the *Hammerers*, won back their liberty.[1] The Pharisees professed to be rigid observers of the Law, that is, of its material observance, and they ascribed the misfortunes that befell their nation to a lack of ex-

[1]We have many decisive proofs of the rigor of the Pharisees with regard to the Mosaic Law, even anterior to the time of Christ. When Judas Machabeus entered into an alliance with the Romans, an alliance forbidden indeed by the Law, but necessary because of the straitened condition in which the nation then was, he was bitterly upbraided by the sect of the Pharisees. If, then, they did this, in circumstances so trying and against a hero so brave, and a champion of his country and religion so glorious as Judas Machabeus, it will be easy to form an idea of their inflexible spirit. But this sect, whom we may call the *Jewish Intransigents*, rendered very great service to religion and to their country, and they preserved both the one and the other in the midst of the severest trials. See Card. Meignan, The Machabees.

actness in this respect. They added to the Law many traditions and usages, to which they gave equal force with the Law, thus rendering this not only burdensome and vexatious, but ridiculous.[1] The Pharisees were pre-eminently the national party; they opposed the rule of the stranger, held it to be unlawful to pay tribute, and looked forward to and yearned for the regaining of the liberty of their country. It is only natural that the rigidity of their teachings, their austere lives, and their patriotic fervor should conciliate the esteem and win the confidence of a people so attached to the Law and so jealous of their independence.[2]

The *Publicans* or *tax-gatherers* collected the public duties or revenues and whether because of their office, in itself odious, or because of the abuses they committed or of the vexations they caused, were in bad repute with the people, among whom a *Publican,* a *sinner,* and a *thief* were words of synonymous meaning. For the most part these Publicans were foreigners.[3]

In this parable Jesus gives us a vivid picture of the pride and insolence of the Pharisee, and of the humble self-knowledge of the Publican. It is difficult to express better in a few words the nature and character of the Gospel teaching. I will repeat them and allow you to judge.

[1]To what extremes they pushed the interpretation of the Mosaic Law, as, for example, in regard to the Sabbath as a day of rest, is clear from the Gospel. Among the Pharisees the question was mooted as to whether an egg laid on the Sabbath could be eaten.

[2]See Bonghi, Life of Christ, p. 64, and Didon, Jesus Christ, passim.

[3]"Vita publicanorum aperta est violentia, impunita rapina, negotiatio nulla ratione constans, inverecunda mercatura." Such is the description of a Publican left us by Suidas.

Jesus spoke this parable *"to some who trusted in themselves as just and despised others."* Who were those who trusted in themselves as just, and moreover despised others? The Gospel does not name them, but it is clear from the context that they were Pharisees, a sect that was, as we have said, filled with pride and who therefore despised others, for haughtiness leads naturally to contempt for our fellowmen.

If we consider well the nature of pride and arrogance, we shall discover that of all the passions this is the most culpable and the most malicious, and that of all sinners the proud and arrogant are the most hateful to God. The supreme end of all creation and of all the external works of God is His glory; now pride of its very nature leads man to take to himself the glory due to God and instigates him to put himself in God's place, and to arrogate to himself the honor and homage which belong to God. It was quite natural, then, that Jesus Christ, who was all kindness and charity toward sinners, whether men or women, when they acknowledged their failings, should be sternly inexorable toward the proud Pharisees and should scourge them without pity. Gluttony, avarice, anger, envy, and lust are indeed shameful and brutish passions and sins that dishonor our nature and displease God, but pride is far worse than any of them. If sensuality and incontinence are the lust of the body, pride is the lust of the soul; it is the sin of the rebel angels; it is the first sin; it began in heaven; it is the most difficult to bring to avow itself; it lies nearest to the human heart;

it is most crafty in masking itself, and it is the last to be dislodged from the soul. To cure men of this pest Jesus spoke His parable: *"Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican."* I have said all that is necessary concerning the condition of these two men. Let us now follow them into the Temple and see how they go before God and how they pray.

The Pharisee enters with his head erect, not deigning to cast a glance on his lowly fellow mortals; he makes his way through the throng, goes straight up to the highest place in the Temple near the altar, so as to be seen by all, and there standing erect he begins his prayer: *"O God, I give Thee thanks."* The beginning of the prayer is splendid, excellent, as St. Augustine says; he thanks God. The life of man is one continuous beneficence on the part of God, and it ought to be one continuous thanksgiving, one ceaseless hymn of praise on the part of man to his great Benefactor. The words: *"O God, I give Thee thanks,"* should be ever on our tongue. May they be uttered by us at least occasionally during the day, for we should remember the saying that the most efficacious way to obtain benefits from God is to prove ourselves grateful for those already received.

The Pharisee began his prayer well; but he proceeds at once to spoil it, and the prayer is transformed into an expression of personal complacency and into a ridiculous brag. Listen to him: *"O God, I give Thee thanks,"* for what? *"That I am not like the rest of men, extortioners,*

unjust, adulterers.'' Instead of thanking God, he lauds himself; he asks for nothing, as if he needed nothing and had reached the highest pinnacle of perfection.[1] And worse still, he contrasts himself with other men, and in his arrogance pronounces them all without exception, *''extortioners, unjust, adulterers.''* What pride in these words! What contemptuous scorn of his fellow men, whom he lumps altogether and atrociously insults, calling them thieves and adulterers: *''I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers.''* He alone, this haughty Pharisee, is righteous and virtuous, and that, too, by his own efforts; he sees the mote in the eyes of others, but he can not see the big beam of pride in his own.[2]

While the Pharisee was complacently contemplating his own virtues and soothing himself with the thought that all other men were thieves and adulterers, his eyes fell upon the Publican who was also praying, standing afar off at the lower end of the Temple. The sight roused in him vivid and shocking thoughts concerning the depravity of other men; in an instant the injustices, the rapacity, the extortions of the Publicans stood out before his mind; and, contrasting himself with the Publican, he felt his pride swelling within him and unable to repress it he added to the words: *''I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—as is also this Publican.''* His scorn for the poor tax-gatherer could not have

[1] *Noluit Deum rogare, sed se laudare. . . .* Nihil sibi addi cupiebat.''—ST. AUGUSTINE, Hom. xxxvi, De Verbis Dom.

[2] *Non sum* sicut cæteri homines, raptores etc., quid est, nisi omnes homines, præter ipsum? Ego justus sum, cæteri peccatores.''—ST. AUGUSTINE, ut supra.

been more withering.[1] He rashly branded him as a great sinner, which he might not have been, and which in matter of fact he was not, and he offered him an outrageous insult, calling him an extortioner, an unjust man, and an adulterer: *"As also is this Publican."* Such is the natural fruit of pride and arrogance, of rash judgment and contempt of others, of insolence and haughtiness.

Let us be on our guard, my friends, against the vile passion of pride, which more or less has a hold on all of us and which it is easy to recognize by its fruit. Would we know and touch with our finger this baleful growth, a heritage from our first parents and the root of all evil? Let us enter into ourselves, let us search our hearts, let us place ourselves face to face with our conscience and interrogate it in God's sight and we shall easily discover whether we at times attribute to ourselves endowments and excellences and virtues which we do not possess, or which, if we possess, we are inclined to exaggerate; whether it is a pleasure to have others know and praise them; whether the thought that we are forgotten or neglected disturbs us; whether it is a trial to us to see others grow in name and good repute; whether we are prompt to discredit those who cast a shadow across our path and strive to keep them down; and whether we love to take precedence of others. What is all this, my friends, but the fruit of the evil germ of pride, whose roots are sunk deep into our hearts? Let us strive, if not to pluck it up and root it out altogether, which is im-

[1] "Ecce ex vicino publicano major est pharisæo tumoris occasio." —St. Augustine, loc. cit.

possible, at least to cut it off so that it can not grow and produce such deadly fruit.

The Pharisee was not satisfied with publicly declaring that he was not an extortioner, unjust, and an adulterer, as were all other men and as was the poor Publican; spreading his sails to the caressing breezes of pride and vanity, he ostentatiously parades his virtues, saying: *"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess.* Others are thieves, I pay my debts, and give to every man what is coming to him; I fulfil all the prescriptions of the Law; others indulge the lawless desires of the flesh, I chastise my flesh by fasting twice in the week, and therefore, O Lord, am I just." What does this arrogant Pharisee mean? To fast and to fulfil the prescriptions of the Law is indeed to do what is good and holy; but does all virtue, does all sanctity consist in these two practices? What is to be said of charity toward the poor, of patience, of compassion toward the weak and suffering, and of humility of heart? As you see, the Pharisee made righteousness consist in external acts, in paying tithes and in fasting, but what of the rest? Virtue and holiness have their home in the mind and heart; God wants the homage of the body, certainly, but He wants first the worship of the spirit, and the former is valuable and acceptable to Him only in so far as it proceeds from the latter.

"If Thou, O Lord," said David, *"hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it; with burnt offerings Thou wilt not be delighted. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."*

Let this great truth, my friends, be engraven on your hearts, and keep it always in mind; God wants us, not our possessions; He wishes first the homage of the intellect, the tribute of the heart's love; He wishes what is within, and then as a token of this internal devotion and loyalty He will accept our external service.

But granted that the Pharisee by the external observance of the Law, by fasting, and by mortifying the body, possessed every other virtue even in the highest perfection, would he have been just in God's sight? Would he have had a right to an everlasting reward? Assuredly not; his pride ruined every virtue, destroyed every possible chance of gaining merit, and God would say to him what was said by Our Lord of all such persons: *"Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them; Amen, I say to you, you have received your reward."* The end gives character to an act, and hence the worth and merit of actions are mainly measured by the end; if the end or motive for which an action is done is bad, the action, though in itself good, is regarded as bad. God so judges actions, and so do men if they know the motive. Say, for example, that a so-called friend lavishes loving kindness upon you, does you honor, renders you every possible service, and is at all times ready at your beck and call; but some fine day you learn that he is doing all this from interested motives, to use your name and influence in gaining some object, and that a blameworthy one; and that except for this he would not care a fig for you; tell me, what would you think of such a friend? How would you value

his services and his professions of love? I think you would be justly indignant with him, that you would strike off his name from your list of friends, and that you would drive him out of your home as a deceiver and a hypocrite. This is a parallel case to a man who practises virtue, discharges all his duties, and, if you will, does great and heroic deeds, not with the thought of honoring God, of pleasing Him and doing His will, but to feed his own vanity, to have his name in the mouths of others, and to gain both profit and pleasure from it. God, who sees the motive or end, which is the soul of every act, sees also that the works are done not for Him but for others, and He spurns them, saying with just indignation: "You did not these works for Me, but for yourself and for others; why should you look for a recompense to Me, for whom you have done nothing? Seek it of yourself or from those for whom you have labored. *Thou hast received thy reward.*"

Thus the most holy and sublime works, if not done for God, are simply rubbish and filth in His sight. So, my friends, never allow the moth of pride to mar your works as it marred the fasting and the other works of the Pharisee. After we shall have done our full duty and practised all the virtues proper to our state with the one motive of pleasing God, let us say: "We are useless servants; what little we have done we have done with Thy aid, O Lord, since without it we could have done nothing, and therefore to Thee and to Thee alone be all the glory."

We have seen the Pharisee and heard what he had to say; now let us see and hear the Publican,

one very unlike the Pharisee. *"And the Publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven."* He was a sinner defiled by every evil habit; he knew it, he felt it in his heart. Having barely entered the Temple, he halted; he did not dare approach the altar, he thought himself unworthy to stand in that holy place, and he regarded it as a signal favor that God so much as tolerated him in His presence. Conscious of his sins, he felt a hot flame burning his countenance; he cared not for others, he was ashamed of himself; he saw no good in himself and his transgressions stood out before his mind as they never did before. He bowed his head in the palms of his hands and went over in memory one by one his iniquities, he measured their gravity, he weighed their guilt; his conscience was startled and he wept, and in the bitterness of his soul he could find no refuge or hope save in the mercy of God and in his pardon, and falling on his knees he beat his breast and gave vent to his feelings in these simple and eloquent words: *"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."* He struck his breast! What did he mean by thus striking his breast? St. Augustine says that he reproached himself, and as it were punished the sin which was in his will and lodged in his heart.[1] The poor Publican by his humble attitude, by beating his breast, his eyes filled with tears and fixed on the floor, crying out: *"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner,"* meant to say: "O Lord I know I am a sinner; I confess before men and before Thee that I am a great

[1]Tundere pectus quid est, nisi arguere quod latet in pectore, et evidenti pulsu occultum castigare peccatum?" (Serm. viii, De Verb. Dom.)

sinner; I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for having offended Thee, my Lord and my God, Thee whom I should love above everything else. My heart is breaking and my soul is grieved and desolate. I have no hope but in Thy infinite mercy; I cast myself on Thee; I abandon myself to Thee. O my God and my Lord, I crave mercy and pardon."

In these words and acts of the Publican there was a living faith, a firm hope, an ardent charity, a deep humility, an honest and fervid prayer. He did not excuse himself; he did not cast the blame of his faults on others; he did not hesitate a moment in acknowledging them, in confessing them in a loud voice, in a public and venerable place, in the presence of all, even of the Pharisee, who cast upon him a look of scorn and derision. So much grief and so much humility could not fail to obtain the pardon of his sins, had they been both in number and gravity a thousand times greater than they were. "*I say to you,*" said Jesus Christ, "*this man,* the Publican, *went down to his house justified rather than the other,* the Pharisee."[1] "Thus," says a celebrated interpreter, "he who thought himself holy, was condemned by God; and he who confessed himself a sinner, was justified by God."[2] "He who presented himself before

[1]Interpreters dispute about the sense of these words of the text: "*Descendit hic justificatus in domum suam ab illo.*" They can not agree as to the meaning of *ab illo.* To whom or to what does it refer? To the Pharisee? To the Temple? To God? It is not clear. To me the interpretation of Curci seems the obvious one. The Publican went down to his house reconciled to God rather than the Pharisee, who went away as much of a sinner as when he came, and more.

[2]Euthymius.

God full of himself," says St. Bernard, "went away empty; and he who presented himself empty of self, that is, humble, went away full of grace." "It is better," says St. Optatus of Milevum, "to be a sinner and humble, than to be innocent and proud."[1] One who is humble and confesses his sin is justified; one who thinks himself just and is full of self, is not just but a sinner, and what is worse, he does not know he is a sinner.

You may search the Gospel from beginning to end and you will find Zaccheus, a publican; Mary Magdalen, a sinner; the Samaritan, a woman of dissolute life; the adulteress taken in the act; Peter, a perjurer and Paul a persecutor, all of whom at a word from Our Lord, at the call of grace, gave up their sin, changed their lives, were converted, did public penance and became great saints and apostles; but will not find a single Pharisee, who, though called and taught by Christ and urged by His most earnest entreaties, by promises and threats, to do penance, that changed his life and followed the Master. On the contrary, they replied to His admonitions by insulting Him; they distorted His words, they reviled His miracles, and, unable to deny them, they took counsel and came to this conclusion: "This man does many miracles; we can not deny it; it is therefore necessary to do away with Him." It is a mystery of iniquity and perfidy which would be incredible were it not recorded in the Gospels.

And unaccountable as the fact is, do we not see the same thing happening under our own eyes? There are men sunken in all sorts of vice, given

[1]Lib ii, cont. Donat.

up to revelry and carousing, dissolute, passionate, wholly intent on accumulating riches and not scrupulous as to the means they employ, wholly forgetful of their souls and practically unbelievers, but withal not proud. They go, it may be, to a mission, or some misfortune overtakes them, or they are stricken with disease and lie at the point of death, or some accident befalls them, or some other agency of the divine mercy recalls them to themselves, and you see them fall at the feet of the priest and confess their sins, or call him to their bedside and they are converted and live holy lives. On the contrary there are others, who live, if you will, fairly correct lives; who do not indulge in certain discreditable excesses and give no public scandal; but who regard themselves as men of learning; who are full of themselves, proud, and despise the poor, whom they look down upon as from an altitude. These give us the lamentable spectacle of men who never darken the door of a church, who repel the priest and spurn the crucifix even at the hour of death, and who are insensible to the tears of mother and wife, of sons and daughters imploring them to be reconciled to their God. Whence, my friends, comes the prompt, frank conversion of the former and the cold, invincible obstinacy of the latter? I can find it only in the humility of the one and the pride of the other, and in the words of St. James: "*God gives His grace to the humble and resists the proud.*" This spirit of pride, my brethren, this haughtiness of heart, this arrogant disdain of poor sinners, I regret to say, I see widely diffused among us, even among those who should be

patterns of humility, of compassion, and of charity toward the erring. Their language is stern, insolent, and disdainful, recalling that of the Pharisee, and instead of drawing sinners to God, they drive them away from Him. Let us not imitate these. A thousand times better is the Publican, and the humble and sincere sinner, than the proud and arrogant Pharisee.

Jesus Christ gathers into a short and beautiful sentence the whole fruit of this parable: *"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."* Which is equivalent to saying that he who is proud, as was the Pharisee, shall be cast off by God and covered with confusion, and he that abases himself, humbles himself, confesses that he is a sinner, will be received by God, obtain pardon and be exalted on the day on which He will render to every man according to his works. Would we be exalted in glory? Let us humbly abase ourselves now; the deeper a tree sinks its roots into the earth, the higher will it lift its head; and the deeper the foundations, the firmer and higher the superstructure. Humility is the measure of glory.[1]

[1] "Sicut superbia omnium malorum fons est, ita humilitas cunctarum virtutum origo est."—St. Joan. Chrysostom. in Matt. Homil. xlv.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XXIII

I MAKE known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand, by which also you are saved: if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: And that He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles: and last of all, He was seen also by me as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace in me hath not been void.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* xv. 1-10.

WE ARE so constituted that we feel the need of a frequent change in our surroundings and in the impressions made upon us, even though these may be both pleasing and beautiful. We tire of the choicest food and drink, if these are always the same; the finest music, the most enchanting

view, the most lovely landscape, after a time cease to be interesting and pleasurable. To enjoy impressions they must be varied; we are like bees, that go from flower to flower, drinking in honey from each and ever tasting new sweetness. The Sacred Books, especially those of the New Testament, are like an immense landscape with a wonderful diversity of scenery, or like a vast meadow covered with a bewildering variety of flowers, or like a banquet table laden with every kind of food. The Church opens before us this landscape, she spreads before us this meadow, she introduces us to this banquet table and she uses every device to diversify the scenery, to give variety to the flowers, and to lay before us a choice of food, in order that our impressions, being constantly changing and constantly novel, may be more interesting and enjoyable. Hence the Church, Sunday by Sunday, appoints a new Epistle and a new Gospel. Now it is a flower plucked from one of the fourteen Letters of St. Paul, or from one of the Letters of St. Peter or St. John or St. James; again she presents for our enjoyment and instruction a scene from one of the Four Gospels, or some of the words and phrases of Jesus Christ, with which the Gospels abound. Thus the novelty of the scenes or of the teaching excites our curiosity and fixes our attention, and thus the food of truth presented to us is at once more agreeable and more beneficial.

The Church on this Sunday has read for our meditation the first ten verses of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, which serve as an introduction to the doctrine of the final

resurrection of our bodies, a doctrine there treated at length by the Apostle. I ask you to consider with me this short reading of the Epistle, in which St. Paul very skilfully opens the way to an explanation of the fundamental doctrine of our future resurrection.

It is clear from this fifteenth chapter of St. Paul to the Corinthians that in the Church of Corinth, founded by him, there were some who, if they did not deny, doubted the resurrection[1] of the body, and suggested difficulties that unsettled the faith of the plain people. Possibly this bad seed had been sown by Hymeneus and Philetus,[2] and as the same Apostle says, had spread like a canker. In order to place this palmary article of our faith beyond all question of doubt the Apostle begins by reminding the Corinthians of what he had taught them, namely, that Christ was truly risen from the dead, and he goes on to cite the witnesses of that miracle, thus preparing the way for the conclusion he subsequently draws, that if Christ be truly risen, He being the Head of the human race, so will all men rise again: *"I make known to you,"* he says, *"the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand."* The Gospel, of which St. Paul here reminds the faithful of Corinth, is certainly not the written Book, but the evangelical teaching or the doctrine of Jesus Christ; this doctrine St. Paul had already announced to them, and they, the Corinthians, had received it: *"Which also you have received,"* and not only have you received it,

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 12-35.
[2] 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.

you firmly cling to it: *"And wherein you stand."* The Corinthians are here praised by St. Paul for two things, first, for having received the Gospel; and second, for persevering in it in the midst of the trials and persecutions by which they were encompassed and harried on all sides.

My friends, the Gospel which the Corinthians received after they had grown up to manhood and womanhood, we received as babes in our mothers' arms before we could know the worth of our treasure; the Corinthians clung tenaciously to it in the midst of danger and persecution; let us imitate them by jealously preserving, at no matter what cost, this holy heritage bequeathed to us by our forefathers: *"Wherein you stand."* It is unfortunately true that some of our brethren, especially of the cultured class, thanks to the craft of the enemy and the instability of human nature, have lost the faith they drank in with their mother's milk; may none of us lose it; may we preserve it living and intact, because with it are inseparably bound up all our future hopes and our everlasting salvation.

Let us follow St. Paul: *"By which* (Gospel) *also you are saved."* But on what condition? *"If you hold fast after what manner I have preached unto you,"* replies the Apostle. It is not enough, my friends, to have the Faith; we must have and preserve it such as it was given to us. Who gave it to us? Jesus Christ, the Author and Consummator of the Faith, but He gives it to us through the Church, its depository and its infallible interpreter. We must, then, receive and preserve this faith just as the Church teaches it; to add to it or take from it a single syllable would

be not only criminal, but a sacrilege. No one is permitted to change a single word of a decision pronounced by a court of justice in applying written law to an individual case, and should any one do so, he would lay himself open to punishment; in the same way must we receive the decisions of the Church, the one only infallible interpreter of the Gospel. Let us receive and hold the Gospel just as the Church delivers it to us, and we shall not have believed in vain: "*Unless you have believed in vain.*" To claim to interpret the Faith to suit our limited intelligence, to expand, to restrict, or to modify it, is to set ourselves above God, to constitute ourselves judges of His word, and to destroy His faith, and this is worse than useless: "*Unless you have believed in vain.*" To do this would be not to believe in God, but in ourselves; and the Faith would be, not God's work, but ours.

And now let us inquire what the Apostle taught the Corinthians. What was the head and front of his Gospel? Here it is: "*For I delivered to you first of all, that which I received.*" Truth, whether natural or supernatural, whether of reason or of faith, is not the work or the making of man; if it were, he might destroy it or change it; it comes from God and from God alone, and man is but the means or the instrument of its transmission, but not its source or fountain. St. Paul well says then: "The truths, that I have taught you, are not mine; I did not get them out of my own head, but I have received them, just as you have received them from me: *For I delivered to you first of all, that which I also received.*" And from whom did St. Paul receive them? As he says

both here and elsewhere, he received them not from men, or through men, but from Jesus Christ. And what did he receive from Jesus Christ? *"How that Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."* But this is not all: *"And that He was buried and that He rose again, the third day, according to the Scriptures."* These few words, as you will observe, contain an abridgment of all Christian faith: the death of Jesus Christ for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection, in brief, the second mystery of our faith, as taught in the Catechism.

The expression, *"According to the Scriptures,"* here twice used and which the Church preserves in the Symbol or Creed of the Mass, calls for particular animadversion. Why is this phrase set forth with this special insistence? The Scriptures of which St. Paul speaks in this place can not be the Books of the New Testament, very few of which then existed, and it was not to his purpose to quote them or appeal to them. Hence he must have been referring to the Books of the Old Testament, and there was reason for his doing so. Nearly all of the Books of the Old Testament speak of Jesus Christ, of His coming, of His origin, of His life and passion, of His death and resurrection; so much so, that it is no exaggeration to say that the whole life of Jesus Christ was recorded in the prophecies before it was in the Gospels. And this is in very truth a miracle, a proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and hence St. Paul, whose purpose it was to strengthen the faith of his new converts by recalling to their mind the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,

reminds them also that this same life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ were foretold and described in the Sacred Books, so that all the testimonies to His divinity make one sheaf of proof that prostrates all opposition and subdues the most contentious mind. The cumulative effect, St. Paul seems to say, of all the miracles wrought by Christ, which center in the resurrection, is more than enough to show who and what He is; but there is another series of miracles which are interwoven with the miracles of the New Testament, and in which these latter were foretold; and if you will persuade yourselves of this fact, take up the Old Testament and you will find them all described there long before they took place: "*According to the Scriptures.*"

The scope of the Apostle, as we have said, was to demonstrate the dogma of the resurrection of all men, and to prove this dogma he appealed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as predicted by the prophets. But had the resurrection of Christ really taken place? Was it certain? Could it be proved?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a miracle, the greatest of all the miracles wrought by Him; but it is also a fact, and a fact that can be proved by reason. How are facts proved? Undoubtedly by witnesses, and there is no other way. How can you prove that Christopher Columbus discovered America, or that Geoffrey de Bouillon took Jerusalem? By the testimony of witnesses who saw or heard these facts. So also in our case. If Jesus Christ be truly risen, we must know it from those who saw Him and heard Him after He had risen. Let us, then, call witnesses, worthy of be-

ing believed, to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. St. Paul names them in a general way and his words are but a repetition and a summary of the Gospel narratives. "*Jesus Christ,*" he says, "*was seen by Cephas,*" that is, by Peter. It is worthy of note that the Apostle, describing the principal apparitions of Jesus Christ, mentions first that made to Peter, which must have occurred on the very day of the resurrection, as is clear from the narrative of St. Luke,[1] although it is not described in detail.[2] And why should the apparition made to Peter be named first? "*He was seen by Cephas.*" I feel sure that the reason is to be sought in the fact of the dignity of Peter; he was the Head of the apostles, the foundation stone of the Church, the vicar of Jesus Christ, who frequently so designated him. His testimony, therefore, was greater than that of the other apostles, and hence he is named before them; and it is an indubitable testimony to the Primacy of St. Peter that St. Paul names him first in this place, and the fact is well worthy of being noted.

After the apparition to St. Peter comes that to all the apostles together: "*And after that He was seen by the eleven.*" Jesus appeared on the night of the day of the resurrection to the other apostles gathered in Jerusalem; there were only ten, because Judas, the traitor, was not there, and neither was St. Thomas, as St. Luke tells us.[3]

[1] xxiv. 34.

[2] There is no doubt that, as related by the Evangelists, the risen Christ first appeared to the women and to Magdalen, who had gone to the sepulcher at break of day, but the Apostle is silent about this apparition and confines himself to those made to the apostles and disciples, and the reason is manifest.

[3] xxiv.

Eight days later, St. Luke also tells us, Jesus appeared again to the apostles and at this second apparition St. Thomas was present, and it is undoubtedly to this one that St. Paul refers, when he says: *"And after that by the eleven."* I am of the opinion that St. Paul refers to this second apparition, made to all the apostles, and that he indirectly, but still clearly refers also to the first apparition made to the ten, and recorded also by St. Luke, whose Gospel, according to some, St. Paul called *his: "According to my Gospel."*

St. Paul goes on in his enumeration of witnesses, saying: *"Then he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once."* The words *at once,* used by St. Paul, will not allow us to conclude that those five hundred and more witnesses were the total number of those to whom Jesus appeared at various times after His resurrection; here there is clearly question of a special apparition, at which more than five hundred were present. Nor can it refer to the apparition of Jesus on the occasion of the Ascension, for St. Luke[1] informs us that this took place on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, and it would appear that all those who witnessed it, went thence to the Cenacle and that they numbered about one hundred and twenty. What apparition, then, was this made to above five hundred at once, many of whom, as St. Paul tells us in his Letter, were dead and some of whom were then still living? The Gospels do not tell us when, or where, or how this wonderful apparition took place, but most likely it took place in Galilee, whither Jesus Christ Himself had bid-

[1]Acts i. 15.

den His disciples to go and where He appeared to them: "*Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see Me.*" Whatever may be said of the place or the time of this apparition, it is certain that there were more than five hundred witnesses to it, and that is the important matter.

St. Paul continues the enumeration: "*After that He was seen by James and by all the apostles.*" We do not know the particulars of the apparition made to St. James, who was likely James the Less, afterward Bishop of Jerusalem. The apparition, which St. Paul then says was made to all the apostles, may be regarded as a summing up of all the other apparitions narrated or referred to in the Gospels.

"*And last of all,*" says St. Paul in conclusion, "*He was seen by me, as by one born out of due time.*" "I also," exclaims the great apostle, "have seen the risen Christ; I saw Him on my way to Damascus; I, the least of the apostles, I, an apostle born out of due time, because called to so great a dignity after the others, and in a way wholly different from the others, I also have seen the risen Jesus; I also can bear witness to the resurrection." Here the mind of the Apostle, as was natural, reverted to the memories and to the events of the past; he calls to mind what he is and what he was; he contrasts the great dignity of the apostolate with which he is clothed with his life and conduct before his miraculous call; he feels his own unworthiness and the immense benefit of the grace he received; and in a burst, whether of gratitude or of sorrow, probably of both, he

breaks forth into these sublime words: "*For I am the least of the apostles, who am unworthy to be called an apostle.*" And why, thou vessel of election, dost thou call thyself the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be called an apostle? Didst thou not labor as did the other apostles and more than they? Art not thou the Apostle of the nations? Wert thou not called by Christ Himself and in an instant marvelously transformed? Didst thou not bear thy chains before the world's tribunals for love of Jesus Christ, and wert thou not scourged and stoned for love of Him? Do not the thousands and thousands of Gentiles, gained by thee to Jesus Christ, form thy crown of glory? "Yes," says the incomparable apostle, "this is all true, but I can not forget that I persecuted the Church of God; the blood of St. Stephen is ever before my eyes. I am an apostle of Christ, but I was first His ferocious persecutor: *Beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it.* Of all the apostles, I alone, before being called to be an apostle, persecuted the Church; this is what humbles me, fills me with confusion, covers me with shame, and makes me feel, not only that I am the least of the apostles, but that I am unworthy to be an apostle at all." These two verses in their simplicity and incomparable eloquence lay bare to us the great soul of the Apostle, allow us to look down into its depths, and almost draw tears from our eyes. But let us go back to the subject the Apostle is drawing out.

He is proving, as we said, the future resurrection of our bodies, and to prove it he appeals to the glorious resurrection of the body of Jesus

Christ, our head and pattern. In order to prove the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ he appeals to the authority of witnesses, of Peter and James and the eleven apostles, of all the apostles, of the five hundred persons who saw Him, and finally he produces his own testimony. What a series, what a troop of witnesses, how numerous, how distinguished by moral qualities, how resolute and unfaltering, how various yet how unanimous, and all these qualifications are the measure of the value of their testimony.

Two, three, or four witnesses, upright, intelligent, and worthy of belief, giving testimony to any fact, create in us a certainty of the fact attested, which leaves no shadow of doubt on our minds, and on such testimony tribunals base decisions of the highest importance and all agree that the decisions are reasonable and just. Now the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is attested by all the apostles and disciples, by above five hundred persons, who affirm that they saw Him and touched Him, that they ate with Him and received commands from His mouth; they affirmed this everywhere and always; they affirmed it without faltering and ever in the same words; they affirmed it when the penalty was exile and imprisonment, scourging and death; who, then, can doubt this testimony? If it were possible to doubt such testimony, the testimony of so many persons and of such force and coherence, there would not be upon this earth a single fact of which we could be sure, and we should be forced to doubt everything. It is clear, then, that the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the basis of our faith, rests upon

an immovable foundation, and even the most exacting and skeptical human reason could demand nothing more.

St. Paul said that he was the least of the apostles; it was the honest articulate voice of his conscience; it was the homage due to truth, for humility and truth are inseparably united; humility is truth. "I can honestly say," he repeats, "that I am a wretched persecutor of the Church, and I would be so still, except for the grace of God: *By the grace of God I am what I am.*" And why, O great apostle, are you what you are by the grace of God? "*Because His grace in me has not been void.* It was not as a ray of sun that falls on a closed eye, or as a seed sown on a stony soil, or as a living shoot grafted into a dried-up trunk of a tree. By grace God called me without any merit of mine, aye, in spite of my demerits, but I responded to grace, I responded because He gave me the grace to respond and to do His will. In other words, if I have come out from the blindness of Judaism, if I have embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become its apostle, I owe it all to the grace of God; yet not alone to the grace of God, but also to my co-operation with it." This is the Catholic doctrine on the relation between the grace of God and our free will, set forth with such wonderful clearness and precision by St. Paul that nothing more need be said. God anticipates us with His grace, illuminating our minds and moving our wills, and we allow our minds to be illuminated and our wills to be moved by co-operating with grace, uniting to its action our own. What in fact are the good and righteous ac-

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tions of a Christian? They are the result of the divine action through grace, and of human action through the concurrence of our will, both uniting together and acting in harmony. Remember, my friends, that grace is never wanting and never fails, and the seed remains sterile only when the soil into which it is cast is not prepared and does not respond. May the seed of grace that God lavishes on us never remain sterile, so that we may be able to say with St. Paul: *"The grace of God in me hath not been void."*

The Apostle concludes what he says about the grace of God not being sterile in him but productive of works, by adding: *"I have labored more abundantly than all the apostles."* This is certainly a holy frankness, a wonderful audacity in St. Paul. He protests that he is the least of the apostles, that he is unworthy to be called an apostle, that he is an apostle born out of due time, and then he straightway declares that he has done more than all the other apostles. While it seems a manifest contradiction, it is nevertheless a luminous truth; he is both the one and the other, according as we consider what he was before the action of grace in him, and what he became after grace had transformed him. And because he feared that what he had said: *"I have labored more abundantly than all the apostles,"* might sound like a boast, as if it were all his work, he hastened to explain the startling phrase by adding: *"Yet not I, but the grace of God with me.* The works of my apostolate are indeed great, greater than those of my brothers who were before me in the field; you see them, they are visible to the whole

world; but they are not exclusively mine; they are mine, but with the grace of God that anticipated me, that strengthened me, that led me on to the end." The same truth stated above is here reaffirmed and enforced in a very short but very luminous phrase: "*The grace of God with me.*"

Hold fast, my dear friends, to these two palmary truths of Christian doctrine set forth here by the Apostle; namely, the necessity of the grace of God and of the co-operation of our free will in order to do good and to work out our eternal salvation; these two elements, these two forces, working together bear our souls aloft to the heights of heaven and lay them in the bosom of God; separated, they allow them to fall into the depths of the abyss of hell. Whether they are united or separated depends upon our action, and hence a little reflection will tell us that eternal salvation or eternal loss is in our own hands, since it is always in our power to use or not to use the divine grace which is offered to all and more abundantly than necessary.

HOMILY XXIV

AT THAT time: Going out of the coasts of Tyre, He came by Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb: and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, be thou

opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And He charged them that they should tell no man. But the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it: And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.—Gospel, *Mark* vii. 31-37.

This is the Gospel reading which the Church puts before us for our meditation on this, the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost. There is not a single sentence that refers to the truths which we are to believe, or to the virtues which we are to practise; it only relates the miracle wrought by Jesus on the one deaf and dumb. St. James teaches us, however, that there is not in Sacred Writ a single passage or phrase that does not contain some precious truth, and there is no doubt that in this narrative there are also lessons of great wisdom which it is most useful for us to know. St. Irenaeus says the Holy Scripture is like a mine rich in gold; to find the precious metal we must dig down and penetrate into the bowels of the earth, search carefully everywhere, and having found it, separate it from the refuse. This is what we shall try to do this morning in studying the fact related in the Gospel just read for you.

"*Jesus going out of the coast of Tyre, came by Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis.*" It is quite unusual to find the places honored by the presence of

Jesus, so carefully named and described as they are in this passage. Let us stop for a moment to get a slight knowledge of this place, selected by Jesus as the scene in which to display the works of His power.

Palestine stretches from Libanus almost to the confines of Egypt; it is bounded on the east by the mountains of Moab, by the River Jordan, by the Lake of Genesareth or Tiberias and by the Dead Sea; and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Its average width from east to west is seventy-five miles, and its length from north to south is about one hundred and ninety; its total extent is much less than Lombardy, or eleven thousand square miles. Galilee is bounded by Libanus, by the Lake of Tiberias, and by the Mediterranean Sea and separated from Judea by Samaria, which lies between them. There was a time when its hills, its valleys, and its mountains, the wonderful fertility of its soil, covered with crops and vineyards, with olive orchards and oleanders, made Judea an enchanting country; the very smile of Heaven rested upon it; but now it is desolate and almost a desert.[1] It was there on the smiling shores of the Lake of Genesareth, amid the lovely surrounding hills, that Jesus began to preach the kingdom of Heaven to the poor, and to announce the most sublime truths that ever came from the lips of man.[2] After the miracle of the multipli-

[1]Galilee was a small country but marvelously fertile and densely populated. To this Pliny and Josephus Machabeus bear witness, and one of them, I do not remember which, states that it contained two hundred towns. Even supposing that these were small, the population must have been, as is easily seen, very numerous.

[2]Interpreters, and especially modern interpreters, distinguish two

cation of the five loaves, as you know, the people in their enthusiasm wished to make Him king, and as it seems, to quiet the popular tumult and to prevent any attempt of the kind, He withdrew and retired from those parts. As the Evangelist tells us, He went toward the sea into the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon, where he healed the daughter of the poor Syrophenecian woman. He returned from thence going toward the Lake of Tiberias or Galilee, and passing through Decapolis, or the Ten Cities, a region inhabited by a mixed population of Hebrews and Gentiles.[1] It was on this journey that Jesus wrought the miracle on the deaf mute, narrated in the Gospel, which, however, does not tell us the exact spot where it took place.

Jesus always tried to avoid crowds, but His name was on the lips of all; the natural curiosity to see a miracle, and to hear those words of power, attracted the multitude to Him; the blind and the halt, those afflicted with every manner of disease, intercepted Him in the hope that He might heal them. Among others, the Evangelist says, "*They brought to Him one deaf and dumb, and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him.*" The fact is recorded only by St. Mark. It is well known that dumbness is a consequence of deafness, since one that can not hear can not learn

periods in the preaching of Christ; the first in Galilee, and the second in Judea at Jerusalem; the first is called the preaching of the kingdom of Heaven; in the second Our Lord devoted Himself to proving the divinity of His mission.

[1]Decapolis was a confederation of ten Gentile cities in Palestine; neither their names nor their scope or purpose are definitely known, still it is no difficult matter to know both, at least approximately.

a language; and hence the one misfortune carries with it the other. The Gospel does not say whether this unfortunate person was deaf from his birth, or whether he became deaf later on; it says only that he "*was deaf and dumb*"; but most likely he became deaf after birth, because he was not absolutely a mute; the Greek text says that he spoke imperfectly and with difficulty, muttering and stammering, though he could in a way be said to be a mute.[1] This deaf mute was brought to Jesus by some charitable persons who besought Him to heal him.

And here allow me to make two very simple remarks which the fact suggests. First, there is no doubt but that Jesus knew of the affliction of the deaf mute and that it was His intention to cure it. Why, then, did He not do so without being asked? Why did He put off doing so until He was asked? Precisely in order to be asked. There were few, very few miracles wrought by Jesus without His being asked, and when He was asked He did them at once. And why? Because He wants us to acknowledge our needs; He wants us to humiliate ourselves, to confess our impotency and His omnipotence; because we in a certain way by our prayer concur in obtaining the miracle. It would seem that God wishes to do nothing without us where we can concur with Him in doing it.

Next, our friends outside of the Church deny that the angels and saints in heaven can intercede

[1]The Greek text does not say κωφός or ἀλᾶλος, which properly signify a dumb person, but μογιλάλος, which means a *stammerer* or a *stutterer*, one who speaks with difficulty.

for us; they assert that we, in asking the angels and saints and the Blessed Virgin to intercede in our behalf, do an injury to God, as if He were less merciful than they, and required mediators between Him and us. Here we see certain charitable persons bringing a deaf mute to Jesus and beseeching Him to heal him: "*And they besought Jesus that He would lay His hand upon him.*" And Jesus was not offended, nor did He refuse to hear their prayer, as if it were an affront to Him; on the contrary, He listened graciously to it and as graciously granted their request by working a miracle. If, then, men here on earth, often imperfect men and sinners, may pray for their needy brethren, why may not saints and angels and the Blessed Virgin do the same in heaven? Why should He reject in heaven what He deigns to accept on earth? It is therefore clear that the intercession of the saints is permissible, useful to man, and acceptable to God.

The good country people, who brought the deaf mute to Jesus, not only asked Him to heal the poor unfortunate man, but they asked Him to do so by putting His hand upon his head: "*That He would lay His hand upon him.*" It is rather strange to hear these good people asking Jesus to do a miracle, and then almost prescribing to Him the way He should do it, namely, by laying His hand upon the deaf mute. Why should there be a laying on of hands?

This is a rite that was in use among the Hebrews, and it is also a consecrated rite of the Church; it was also an accompaniment of prayer said over a person and a symbol of the divine

grace that came down from on high. Jacob on his deathbed blessed the sons of Joseph, placing his hand on the head of each;[1] and Jairus the chief of the Synagogue, besought Jesus to save his daughter, who was at the point of death, saying: "*Come, lay Thy hand upon her, that she may be safe and may live.*"[2] Jesus blessed the little children and laid His hand upon their heads.[3] Again, Jesus Christ ordained that the Holy Ghost should be given in the sacrament of Confirmation and that the priesthood should be conferred in the sacrament of Order by the laying on of hands. This, then, is a sacred and venerable rite, not only used by Jesus Christ, but by Him raised to the dignity of a sacrament. The laying of the hands upon the head, the noblest and most exalted part of man, united with prayer to God, is a shadowing-forth of the mysterious commerce between earth and heaven, between man and God, and seems to establish between the two an invisible current of grace. This is why those who brought the deaf mute to Jesus besought Him to lay His hand upon him and heal him. It was as if they said: "Pray for him and heal him."

Jesus was never besought in vain; go through the Scriptures page by page and verse by verse, and you will find that, though Jesus often wrought miracles unasked, He never sent any one away unheard, who asked Him for a favor. He could not, the benevolence of His heart would not permit His doing so, in spite of the fact that the

[1]Gen. xlviii. 14-17.
[2]Mark v. 23.
[3]Mark x. 16.

favors asked were for the most part temporal and not spiritual favors, and of this we have a proof in the fact recorded in this day's Gospel.

Jesus seeing before Him the wretched man, whom his friends had brought, and hearing their prayer, was touched with compassion, "*and, taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched His tongue, and looking up to heaven, He groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, be thou opened.*"

It is not necessary to say, my friends, that Jesus, the Son of God, being omnipotent, could work any miracle when and where and as He would by a simple act of His will, without manifesting any, even the slightest, external sign or token; but it is clear from the Gospel that He always accompanied His miracles by some visible act, by a prayer, or a word, or a command, or some other sign, which varied as the circumstances varied. He cast out demons, He stilled the storm on the lake by an absolute command, He healed the sick, He cleansed the lepers, He restored sight to the blind by the simple words: "Be ye made whole, be ye cleansed, receive your sight;" He healed the paralytic by saying: "Take up thy bed and go thy way;" He called back Lazarus to life by saying: "*Lazarus, come forth.*"[1] It is evident that Jesus in working His miracles accompanied them with some words, or some act or touch, not because these were necessary to Him, which would be absurd, but to show in the coincidence between His words, His acts, or His touch, and the miracu-

[1]In the Greek original there are not three words, but two: "Lazarus, come."

lous effect, that the latter was truly of His doing. Had His miracles not been accompanied by some external manifestation of His will, which was the cause of them, who could have safely and of a certainty said or believed that they were His work? The words and acts accompanying the miracles were various, but in general they corresponded with the nature of the miracles themselves and with the circumstances of time, place, and person, and with the end He had in view in working them.

Having said this much let us now go on and examine the very singular means employed by Jesus Christ in healing the deaf mute. First of all He took him aside from the crowd: "*And taking him from the multitude apart.*" He did not take him apart, I think, in order that they might be alone together and out of sight of the multitude; but He took him to a little distance from the crowd in order that they might the better witness the miracle and the way in which He performed it; since, as you know, the chief purpose He had in view in working His miracles was to prove and confirm His divine mission, and, as a consequence, the doctrine which He taught. Now to accomplish this purpose it was necessary that there should be no doubt about His miracles, and that they should be performed in the full light of day, and not secretly, that thus the most exacting, and even His enemies, might be convinced.

When Jesus had taken the deaf mute apart and placed him so that he could be seen by all, he put His fingers into his ears, and, moistening His thumb or pointer finger with saliva, He touched

His tongue. Now why did He do all this? I have just told you; not indeed that these actions were necessary to work the miracle, or that in them was contained the secret or the efficacy of the cure, but solely to show that it was He who healed the unsound parts or members by applying to them His own hidden and omnipotent virtue, shadowed forth in those mysterious touches. Nor did He stop here. He heaved a sigh and from His inmost soul uttered a moan of distress and at the same time raised His eyes to heaven: *"And looking up to heaven He groaned."* The two acts, while distinct, were simultaneous. By that sigh or groan He indicated that all the miseries of the human family were visible to Him, touched His heart, and evoked His pity, and of this the deaf mute was a living example and a proof more convincing than words; He also indicated by it that the healing virtue came not from the earth or from man, but from on high, from God Himself.

If we consider the nature of external actions themselves we shall see that they are words, eloquent words, or signs, which make manifest what goes on in the mind; but if to these actions be added the spoken words that explain them, their meaning is made clear and all doubt of it is removed. Hence Jesus Christ in instituting the sacraments, which are rites that work inwardly in the soul what they express outwardly, added to the actions, words or forms which clearly explain their meaning. Thus the pouring of water on the head of the child expresses internal purification and cleanness of soul; and the anointing of the forehead with chrism expresses the internal unc-

tion of grace, while the words that accompany these rites precisely explain what they work or what are their effects. This is why Jesus Christ in touching the ears and the tongue of the deaf mute, in raising His eyes to heaven, and in groaning piteously from the depths of His heart, added the word: *Ephpheta,* be thou opened, which said all, and explained all.[1]

It is easy to imagine the solemn hush of anxiety and expectation of the surrounding crowd at that moment. All eyes were fixed on Jesus and on the deaf mute; those at a distance rose on tiptoe to get a better view; the ears of all were intent to catch the words of Jesus and of the deaf mute, if perchance any were uttered; and the silence was oppressive; even the buzzing of an insect could be heard.

Scarcely were the words of power, "Be thou opened," uttered when the ears were opened and the string of the tongue loosed and he spoke fluently.[2] The twofold infirmity of deafness and dumbness was certain; there could be no question about it; all knew of it, and Jesus used no natural remedy, unless to touch the ears and the tongue, to look up to heaven and groan aloud, and to utter the word "*Ephpheta*" can be called such. Granted that He did employ some natural remedy, this could not have produced an instantaneous ef-

[1] *Ephpheta, Be thou opened,* is an Aramaic word, which was the dialect or tongue used by our Saviour, and this word St. Mark heard from St. Peter, who was present at the miracle, and the Evangelist wished to preserve it in his Gospel just as it was spoken, as a greater evidence of the miracle.

[2] These words, "*He spoke right,*" show sufficiently clearly that the man was not properly a mute, but an unfortunate man who spoke with an effort or with great difficulty.

fect, and the whole multitude were witnesses to the fact that the cure was instantaneous, and therefore it could not be ascribed to any human power or cause, but solely to the command of Christ, and hence it was a manifest miracle.

And now let us make a few not wholly useless reflections. As there are in the world men, thank God not many, who suffer with infirmities of the ears and of the tongue of the body, so are there many, very many who suffer with infirmities of the ears and of the tongue of the soul. There are those who never hear the word of God, or, if at times they hear it, they do not get at the heart of its meaning; there are those who never loose their tongue in prayer, who never thank God for benefits and graces received; who are prompt to speak of everything else, to defend their conduct, their ideas, and their rights, but mute when they should confess or defend the faith thy profess, and the claims of justice and truth. These men, deaf and dumb, need Jesus Christ to open the ears, to loose the string of the tongue of the spirit with a groan from His heart and with that word of power, "*Ephpheta.*" It is indeed true that in holy Baptism, in the rites that preceded it, the sacred minister touched our ears and touched our tongue with his finger moistened with saliva and pronounced the mystical word, "*Ephpheta,*" "be thou opened," as did Christ in the case of the deaf mute in the Gospel; but it is also true that many of us on coming to man's estate voluntarily close those ears that had been opened and tie that tongue that had been loosed, and become again deaf and dumb. What, then, is to be done? Jesus

is ready to renew in each one of us the miracle He wrought on the deaf mute, of whom the Gospel speaks; let us allow Him to work the same prodigy in us; let us beseech Him to do it with the same groan and the same omnipotent word, "*Ephpheta.*" Let us keep our ears ever open to hear the word of God and our tongue loosed to speak His praises.

After the miracle had been wrought and made manifest to all by the fact that the poor man, who had been deaf and dumb, now spoke freely and fluently, "*Jesus charged them that they should tell no man, but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it.*"

In the same Gospel of St. Mark[1] it is related how Jesus drove a legion of devils out of a man with an unclean spirit, whom they tormented and mangled horribly, and having done so, said: "*Go into thy house to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.*" How can these two commands of Jesus Christ be reconciled? In one He forbids the miracle wrought on the deaf mute to be spoken of; in the other He directs the man miraculously freed from the unclean spirit to tell his friends what the Lord had done for him. Was it not fitting that the miracle wrought on the deaf mute should be preached abroad, that thus the divine mission of Jesus Christ might become known? Was not this the very purpose for which He worked miracles? In the interest of the salvation of souls and for the greater glory of His Father, Jesus, it would

[1]vi. 1-19.

seem, should have desired to give the greatest possible publicity to this miracle; why, then, did He declare that He did not wish to do so?

It is hardly necessary to say that no act of Jesus could be a contradiction of another of His acts, nor was there ever even the shadow of a contradiction between one act of His and another. The difference of His conduct in these two instances may possibly be explained by a difference in the conditions of time, place, and circumstance, in each; what these were we do not know nor does the Gospel tell us.[1] Possibly also the twofold nature of Jesus, as some interpreters note, is here to be taken to account, the divine and the human. As man He said: "My glory is as nothing," and He loved to be unknown, and hence forbade the miracle to be made public, or manifested an inclination to have it kept secret; as Son of God He desired and should have desired to have it known and published about everywhere. Yet in prohibiting those about Him to speak of it He could not have given an explicit command, for if it had been such, He would have insisted on its being observed, and, if it were violated, He would have spoken some words of reproof and complaint. Moreover, where was the good of requiring silence concerning a miracle, and especially of a multitude that could not repress its amazement and was carried away with a holy enthusiasm? How could they be prevented from loudly expressing their

[1]It appears from the Gospel that at times Jesus Christ was anxious not to irritate excessively His enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, and that He imposed silence on the crowd to show that He sought not the praises of men, and that if these were given, they were a spontaneous tribute of admiration and gratitude.

gratitude? This was the simple duty of the people, of the deaf mute, of his kinsfolk, and of his friends.

The Gospel concludes with these words: "*And so much the more did they wonder saying: He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.*" The multitude could not help breaking out into some such exclamation as this, an exclamation in which were mingled and summarized the words of praise and gratitude that went forth from their hearts up to the throne of grace.

My friends, how many and how great are the blessings and benefits that we receive day by day, aye, every instant, from God! We can truly say that our whole existence is one uninterrupted benevolence on the part of God both in the natural order and in the supernatural. These benefits are incomparably greater than that received by the deaf mute and applauded by the multitude. And precisely because the benefits lavished upon us are unceasing, they pass unobserved, and we very, very often forget to give thanks for them to the generous Giver. They grow common by being unremitting. Let us not be thus unthankful, my friends. If not at every moment, at least from time to time during the day, at least at its dawn and at its close, let the cry go out from our hearts, the cry of praise and admiration, of thanksgiving and gratitude, which the miraculous cure of the deaf mute wrung from the multitude that witnessed it. Let us say: "He is our God, our Creator, and Saviour, and hath done all things well; to Him be honor now and forevermore. Amen."

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XXV

BRETHREN: Such confidence we have, through Christ toward God: Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God: who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter, but in the Spirit, for the letter killeth: but the Spirit quickeneth. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory: much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.—EPISTLE, 2 *Cor.* iii. 4-9.

THESE six verses, taken from the second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, are read in the Epistle of the Mass of this Sunday. This second Letter of St. Paul to the faithful of the Church of Corinth may be regarded as an appendix or a continuation of his first Letter. A considerable portion of it is devoted to a personal defense of his own conduct and of his apostolate, and in this portion He skilfully interweaves praise and reproof, commands and counsels. After remitting the penalty inflicted by him in his first Letter on the incestuous Corinthian and exhorting the faithful to receive him benevolently, he refers to the progress

the Faith is making among them, and finally goes on to speak of himself, affirming that he has been loyal in the apostolic ministry and protesting that in saying so he is not praising himself, since his most splendid justification, one more eloquent than any Letter, which the whole world can read, is their own steadfastness in the Faith. And here begins the interesting passage just read for you, on which we shall meditate together this morning. You will, of course, give the subject your closest attention.

I have frequently remarked to you, while commenting on the Letters of St. Paul, that from the very day of his conversion to the last day of his life he was made the mark for the most ferocious persecution both from Pagans and Hebrews, especially from the latter, who regarded him as an apostate and a traitor. They mistrusted him, they hated him; and, still worse, many Christians, who had abjured the Law of Moses and embraced Christianity, questioned the purity of his teaching, spread evil reports about him, saying that he was an enemy of Moses, an innovator, and a false apostle, and in every possible way impeded him in his labors and preaching. These most injurious suspicions, these accusations and calumnies, this incessant war waged against him by those whom he called *false brethren,* profoundly afflicted his great soul and he often, as in this Letter, bitterly complains of them. This is a valuable lesson and a comfort for those men, and there have been many such in the Church from the days of the apostles to our own, who, conscious that they are loyal and devoted sons and faithful ministers, have not been

able to hush the evil tongues of the malevolent and the ignorant, who branded them as teachers of error, as prevaricators and men of doubtful faith. It would be difficult to find a single saint, especially of those most distinguished by position and ability and by the splendor of their achievements, who did not suffer vexations, trials, and strong opposition from Christians, from good Catholics, even from saints. Who does not remember what trials St. John Chrysostom and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Cesarius, St. Ignatius Loyola, and St. Joseph Calasanctius, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus Liguori, suffered from pious persons and even from saints. God permitted it all to purify His servants and to keep them humble, and there is certainly no more acute sorrow than to find that one is opposed by good men and regarded by them as holding or teaching error. Those who were so unfortunate as to be thus judged during the lifetime of the great apostle could comfort themselves with the assurance that they had in him a model for imitation. And now let us begin the commentary on the Epistle.

In the last verse of the preceding chapter St. Paul says: *"For we are not, as many, adulterating the word of God, but with sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ, we speak."* And he goes on in the next chapter: *"Such confidence have we through Christ toward God,"* that is, whatever others may think or say, we are firmly and intimately convinced that, through the grace of Jesus Christ, we sincerely and faithfully preach the word of God. And to whom should this sufficiency, this fidelity in the apostolic ministry, of

which the Church established of Corinth is a witness and a proof, be ascribed? To whom does this merit belong? Is it the work and the fruit of my natural power? the teacher of the Gentiles seems to ask. "No," he replies at once, and in a phrase that is an admirable confirmation of the Catholic doctrine of the gratuity of grace. "*Not,*" he says, "*that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.*" It is a teaching of faith, my friends, that without the aid of divine grace we can not do anything to merit eternal life; let us explain this truth a little more fully.

God the Creator has given us a body with its senses, a soul with its intellect and free will, and all things external to us necessary or useful to preserve our life and perfect our being; all these goods are called natural goods and constitute what is known as the natural order. Now, had we any right or claim on God that He should have created us and given us these natural gifts and endowments? None whatever, not the slightest right or claim. For we did not even exist, and therefore could have done nothing. And can we by our own natural endowments, by the use of our intellect and free will, by the efforts of our strength, by our own powers, merit even the smallest measure of divine grace? Assuredly not. Nature by its operation can merit only what is natural, never what is supernatural. Can a wild tree produce other than wild fruit? Certainly not. Would you have it produce domestic fruit, fruit sweet to the taste and in abundance? Graft into it a cutting from a domestic or cultivated tree and you will

have such fruit. Now, it is the same with regard to our nature; left to itself it produces only wild fruit, bitter and sour; graft into it divine grace, which illuminates, elevates, and transforms it, and it produces fruits unto eternal life. As without nature we can do nothing in the natural order, neither think, nor will, nor work; so also without grace we can neither think, nor will, nor work, nor do aught in the supernatural order, or anything meritorious of eternal life. Can the eye see without light? Can a field, into which a seed has not been cast, produce a single blade? So also, neither can we without the light of grace, without the germ of grace, know or love or possess God as He should be known and loved and possessed. Grace is necessary in the beginning, it is necessary in the middle, it is necessary at the end; it is necessary at all times. Before setting about to do anything we must know what we are going to do, we must think it out; without this knowledge and forethought it is impossible to accomplish anything, as you know. Therefore before loving and serving God, and before practising virtue, it is necessary to know who God is and to make Him the object of our thoughts, to know what virtue is and to reflect on it; all this is just as necessary as is a foundation for a house. Now St. Paul tells us that of ourselves, of our own strength and powers, we are incapable of even the first good thought: "*Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves,*" and we are sufficient because and insomuch as God gives us the grace to be so: "*But our sufficiency is from God.*" This thought ought to break our pride, make us con-

scious of our nothingness, and constrain us to cast ourselves into the arms of the divine mercy, which is our only hope. Am I conscious of any good in myself, of any virtue? I should say: It is not mine; it is a gift, it is purely and wholly the gift of God. If He should withdraw His gift, withhold His grace, everything would fail and I should pass again into nothingness, as a stone dropped from the hand falls into an abyss.[1]

Let us follow the Apostle. "All that I am and have, the dignity of the apostolate and the fitness to discharge all its duties, is not mine; it is a gift of God, *who hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit.*" There is no religion, whether true or false, that has not its priesthood and its ministers, as there is no State, whether monarchy or republic, that has not its magistrates. The Old Testament, or Judaism, had its priesthood and its ministers; the New Testament, or Christianity, has its priesthood and its ministers. It is clear that the priesthood and ministry of the Mosaic Law ought to have been animated by the spirit of that Law, that the priesthood and the ministry of the New Law ought to be animated with the spirit of the Gospel, just as civil magistrates ought to be animated with the spirit of the law of which they are the interpreters. St. Paul declares that God made him and his companions fit ministers of the New Testament. What is the spirit of the New Testament, and, as a consequence, what should be

[1] "Nemo se alicujus virtutis æstimet etiam cum quid fortiter protest; quia si divina protectio deserat, ibi repente enerviter obruetur, ubi se valenter stare gloriatur."—St. Gregory. M., lib. xxii, apud À Lapide.

the spirit of its ministers? In what consists the difference between the Old Testament and the New, between the ministers of the former and the ministers of the latter? Here it is clearly and incisively stated in two words by St. Paul: "Not in the *letter,* but in the *spirit.*" The Old Mosaic Law was the letter; the new Christian Law is the spirit. It is not possible to express more vividly the characteristic of each. Let us explain.

The Old or Mosaic Law lay on the outside of man; it was concerned with the body rather than with the spirit; it prescribed continuous cleansings of the body, of sacred vessels, of things offered; continuous and innumerable sacrifices and oblations, rites without end and the most minute and the gravest penalties, and other similar ceremonies; but the rites and ceremonies were all external; the worship and religion were chiefly external, because that people cared little for what was interior and knew very little about it.

The New or Christian Law goes straight to the interior; it is mainly concerned about the spirit; it demands purity of heart; it does not reject, rather it imposes external worship, but it makes it subservient to the worship of the spirit; it exacts the homage of the mind and heart; it inculcates the renewal of the interior man; it proclaims that God is a Spirit, and that therefore He will have adorers in spirit and in truth. This is the essential difference between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ.

The Apostle makes his thought still more clear in another sentence. He adds: *"For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth."* How can the

letter, or the Law of Moses be said to kill, and the spirit, or the Law of Christ, be said to quicken? The Fathers, and among them St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, tell us. The Old, or Mosaic Law, is contained in the five Books of Moses, and particularly in the Book of Leviticus, which prescribes the sacred rites and ceremonies. Take it up and go through it and you will find that every transgression has its penalty, a very weighty one, and frequently the penalty is death. If one blasphemes, the penalty is death; if one works on the Sabbath, the penalty is death; if one insults his parents, the penalty is death; if one is a false prophet, the penalty is death, and so on in this spirit; it was, we may say, a law written in blood and necessary to hold in check that turbulent and stiffnecked race.

Now take up the Gospel; it threatens obdurate sinners with eternal punishment in the life to come, but not in a single instance with the penalty of death in this. It desires the conversion of a sinner, but not his death; it strives to convert him by persuasion, but not by force; in a word it is a law of love and not of fear, a law of sons and not of slaves.

In these two words the Apostle brings out in the clearest possible light the difference between the Mosaic Law and the Evangelical and the character of each. Now allow me to ask you a question, my friends. Certainly the Law of Moses, as such, is a thing of the past and is abrogated, and the Law of Jesus Christ has taken its place; but while it is true that the Law of Moses is abrogated and is a thing of the past, is it also true that

there are not found traces of its spirit in the practice of Christians at the present day? It is painful to say so, but it must be confessed that its spirit still dominates and lives in many who never advert to the fact. Such are they who recite many prayers and long ones with the lips and never think of putting their heart and soul into them, who abstain from flesh-meat on the days on which it is forbidden, who hear Mass on feasts and Sundays, who fast often; and all the while their minds are filled with unclean thoughts, they oppress the poor, they blaspheme, they steal, when it is safe to do so, they hate their brothers, they tear their characters into shreds, and yet they think themselves good Christians. Such, too, are they who go frequently, it may be, to the sacraments and make no effort to subdue their passions and practise virtue, deluding themselves with the belief that they have done their full duty; such again are they who revel in religious practices, who make triduums and octaves and novenas, who are assiduous at Benediction and sermons, and who go on pilgrimages and the like, and yet refuse to make the most trifling sacrifice to conquer their passions and failings or to exercise charity, the queen of all the virtues. The religion of such is the religion of the Hebrews, of the Scribes and Pharisees, so frequently lashed in burning words by Christ; it is a religion wholly external, a religion of the body and not of the soul, a religion that fills those who practise it with pride; it is a religion that is all leaves and green boughs and produces no fruit. Let us, my friends, be on our guard against a religion like this, and let us strive

to combine with the letter, or the external practice, faith and hope and charity, or the spirit, and we shall then really live.

Let us again take up the commentary. St. Paul in the foregoing verses draws a parallel or makes a contrast between the old Mosaic and the new Christian Law, between the priesthood of the one and the priesthood of the other, with a view of showing the excellence of the Christian priesthood over the Jewish; he then goes on to say that, if the ministry of death or the Mosaic Law, so terrible against transgressors, often punishing them with death, a law that was destined to disappear, a material law, written on tables of stone, was glorious, especially in its promulgator Moses, whose face, on coming down from Mount Sinai, was so radiant with glory that the people of Israel could not look upon it, if this Law and this ministry, he says, was glorious, how much more glorious will be the New Law, the new ministry, which is wholly spiritual and which will endure until the end of time?

These are strong expressions, but St. Paul is still not satisfied in having so extolled the ministry of the Gospel above that of the Mosaic dispensation; in the next verse, and the last of the Sunday's Epistle, he returns to the same subject and still further enforces its truth. If the ministry of condemnation, he says, or the Mosaic Law, which was so prone to condemn, to inflict corporal punishment, and even death, was so great and so glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry of the New Law, which pardons sin, justifies sinners, regenerates souls, and transforms the sons

of men into the sons of God and heirs to His glory? In other words, if the ministry of the Old Law was great and glorious, especially in the person of Moses, who saw God, heard His voice, and with a countenance radiant with glory bore away His commandments; if it was great and glorious in spite of the fact that it was severe against transgressors, that it must come to an end, and that its purpose was to cleanse the body rather than to purify the soul; if such was this ministry and yet it was glorious, how much more glorious must be the ministry of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ Himself, which is so gentle and so paternal, which inflicts no material punishment on transgressors, which will endure until time is no more, and whose immediate end is the sanctification of souls? "Well, then, this is my ministry," says St. Paul, "a ministry which I have received, not from man, but from Jesus Christ Himself; which I have exercised among you and which I shall continue to exercise as long as I have a breath of life left in me." In this Epistle and in the verses that follow St. Paul is wholly intent on showing that his dignity and his office as an apostle of the New Law is above the dignity and office of the ministers of the Old Law.

It may seem strange to us that St. Paul should write in this way, and it may be we can not understand the importance or the necessity of his doing so; but if we could transport ourselves into his age, if we could witness the struggles which he was forced to carry on against the Judaizing Christians, who wished to bind the Law of the Gospel to the Law of Moses, to confine the benefits of the

redemption wrought by Christ solely to the children of Israel and to shut the door against the Gentiles, we should understand why the Apostle writes so frequently and so vigorously in defense of himself and of his ministry. It was not a personal question with him; it was a question of truth and of the future of the Church, which his enemies wished to make subject to the Synagogue, and the Apostle, seeing the danger and realizing it to the full, raised his voice in warning and he did not spare those apostles, who, whether ignorantly or maliciously, taking shelter under the name of Moses, stood in the way of the spread of the Faith and unsettled and confused the minds of the weak.

Now, my friends, one reflection which is timely, and I have done. The Church of Jesus Christ, from the days of St. Paul until our own, has never been without her trials and her struggles and she never will be as long as she endures on earth. These trials and conflicts vary according to time and place, according to persons and circumstances; now they are intense and ferocious, again they are milder and less severe, but they never cease, and it is natural that they never should cease, since Jesus Christ clearly predicted them. The shadow clings to the substance; disease and infirmity hang upon the heels of the healthy and the strong; error walks side by side with truth, lays snares for it, and combats it; and the apostles of error never make a truce with the apostles of truth. Willingly or unwillingly we are drawn into this conflict, which rages so fiercely between the followers of error and the followers of truth,

between the apostles of this world and the apostles of Jesus Christ. What, then, are we to do? We must keep our eyes always steadily fixed on the safe guides given us by the Church, listen with docility to their words, and refuse to listen to the words of those who boastfully claim to be teachers, but who come not to us in the name and with the authority of the Church.

How did the faithful in the time of St. Paul remain steadfast in the truth and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? By listening to and following the great apostle, who had received his mission directly from Jesus Christ, and by refusing to listen to others, who came indeed from Jerusalem and boasted that they were teachers of the truth. They may have been men of talent and learned in letters and human science, more talented and learned, if you will, than St. Paul, whose speech, as he himself confesses, was rough and unpolished; but (and this we should never forget, especially in this age, when the need of remembering it is so important) it was and is the will of Christ that the truths of faith should never be bound up with or be dependent upon science, or talent, or natural gifts, but entrusted to those who hold the mission of Christ, to the bishops in communion with the Bishop of bishops, the Roman Pontiff. If you will safely guard and keep the treasure of the Faith in the midst of this ever-changing whirlwind of opinions and doctrines, do not listen to those who say, as they said in the time of St. Paul: "We are of Paul, and we are of Apollo, and we are of Peter and we are of Christ," but listen to Paul, to Apollo, and to Peter, to those,

that is, who have the teaching office in the Church, who are your heaven-given guides, and who will lead you on to Christ and to the truth. Never before, it may be, was obedience to the pastors of the Church so necessary as in our day, to those pastors who are united with the Supreme Pastor; because never before as in our day was there such an effort made to put public opinion in the place of the Sacred Hierarchy, to put human authority and human talent in the place of the authority that comes from God; and to put the teaching of private men in the place of the teaching of the legitimate Shepherds of the Church.[1]

HOMILY XXVI

AT THAT *time Jesus said to His disciples:* Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them: and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But He said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all

[1]It would have been a pleasure to me to have added to the word bishops, that of journalists, who are become in this age the teachers and the guides of the people. Journalism is a necessity in the actual condition of things; but it is a danger, and I speak of Catholic, or so-called Catholic, journalism. At times, and unperceived by their readers, Catholic journalists, that is, editors, both priests and laymen, usurp the office of bishops and exercise a dangerous influence, imperiling the hierarchical principle.

thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him: and, having wounded him, went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him: and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner.—Gospel, *Luke* x. 23-37.

Of all the Gospel parables[1] this is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and pleasing; there is none other comparable to it in naturalness, in

[1]Some think that many of the parables are historical facts. In itself there is no reason why this might not be; but the swing, the march of the narrative, the names, as a rule only hinted at, "a certain levite passing by," have all the appearance of a parable rather than of an historical fact.

force, and in the exalted lesson it conveys. Before beginning to comment on it, it will be necessary to show its connection with what precedes, in order to understand the drift of the question put to Jesus by the Doctor of the Law, which gave occasion to the parable of the good Samaritan.

Jesus had sent the seventy-two disciples, two and two, to preach in the cities and villages that he was about to visit. They had returned rejoicing and narrated to Jesus what they had done. Jesus also was pleased at what they told Him and gave fervent thanks to God the Father for their success. He said to the disciples that they ought to be exceedingly glad, because their names were written in heaven; that is, they were certain of eternal life, if they continued, as they began, to correspond with divine grace. Then turning to them He spoke the words with which this day's Gospel begins, and which I am about to explain.

"And turning to His disciples, Jesus said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see; for I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them."

The entire Old Testament was a preparation for the New; all the rites, all the sacrifices, all the figures, all the prophecies of the Old Testament, like rays converging toward a center, had their fulfilment in the New, and especially in Jesus Christ, who was the author and consummator of it all.

The Messias, or Jesus Christ, is the end of the Old Law, as St. Paul says: *"Christ is the end of*

the Law." He is the fixed term of the eternal counsels; He is the point in which everything centers; He is the longed-for one, the desired, the expectation of the ages. Who can say how ardently the patriarchs, prophets, and saints of the Old Covenant yearned for His coming! Abraham and Jacob, Moses and David, Elias, Isaias, and Jeremias, Daniel and all the saints and prophets, called upon Him, longed to see Him, and looking down through the ages, as St. Paul says, saluted Him from afar. "Abraham," Christ says, "saw My coming, and rejoiced: *Abraham, your father rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it and was glad.* And now," said Jesus Christ, pointing toward His beloved apostles and looking lovingly upon them, "what those great saints desired to see and did not see, desired to hear and did not hear, you now see and hear. What a favor has been conferred upon you, what a privilege is yours, and great also is your duty to be grateful and to give thanks!"

My friends, great and inexpressible as was the privilege granted to the apostles of seeing and hearing the Son of God in the guise of man, no less a privilege is ours, who live so many centuries after them. We, also, in reading His words and His teaching in the Gospels, hear the same Jesus Christ whom the apostles heard; we possess the same Jesus, we touch Him, we receive Him into our hearts in that mystery of love, the Blessed Eucharist. Between us and them there is no substantial difference, since we, as well as they, possess Jesus Christ; they possessed Him under a visible human form; we possess Him under the

shadow of the Eucharist, under the species of the sacrament. If there is any difference, it is a difference of manner and not of substance, and hence to us also are addressed those words of Jesus: "*Blessed are the eyes that see the things that you see; for I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.*"

These words Jesus spoke to His apostles, but with them there was a large gathering, and scattered among the crowd, as nearly always happened, were Scribes and Pharisees. They followed Our Lord, as we learn from the Gospels, not to hear the words of life and truth that fell from His lips, but to entrap Him, to distort His words, to accuse Him, and to compass His ruin. Such was the blindness and the malignity of these men, who, being learned in the Law and conversant with the prophets, should have been the first to recognize His divine mission, but instead of doing so, they not only did not range themselves among His followers, but they did their best to alienate the plain people from Him. So blind can the mind become and so perverse the will when under the dominion of pride!

What happened? In the crowd there was a Scribe, a Doctor of the Law, who was casting over in his mind how he might draw from Jesus some unguarded expression, which would furnish a pretext for accusing Him, and with this view he asked a question. He had heard Christ say to His disciples a little while before, that they should rejoice in that their names were written in the book

of life in heaven, and, seizing this thought, he said to Jesus: *"Master, what must I do to possess eternal life,"* that life of which you have just now been speaking? Being a lawyer, he knew well that he had only to keep the commandments of the divine law, but in his malice he hoped that Jesus would have added something more and that this would furnish him an opportunity of accusing Him. Fancy how Jesus must have been annoyed and how He suffered at seeing Himself constantly surrounded by these men, who hated Him, laid snares for Him, and contrived schemes to injure Him. Still He suffered in silence, all the while striving to fill those perverted minds and hearts with the light of truth. Jesus promptly replied: "You are a Doctor of the Law and should very well know what to do. Tell Me then: *What is written in the Law?"* And the lawyer answered: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."* The answer could not have been clearer or more precise; it is the very essence of all the divine teaching. Jesus said to him: *"Thou hast answered rightly; this do, and thou shalt live,* or, your name will also be written in the book of eternal life." I need not say again here, what I have said so often, that the love of God, when it is truly such, implies the perfect fulfilment of the whole Law and of the divine will, and hence it is absolutely true that he who loves has fulfilled the whole Law and is certain to be saved.

The answer of Jesus put an end to all further inquiry on this point, made it impossible for the

lawyer to continue his suggestive and insidious questions, and put him to shame before the multitude. Still he would not admit that he was vanquished and to conceal his irritation and cover his discomfiture, he seized upon the last words of the Law: "*Love thy neighbor as thyself,*" and putting himself in the attitude of a learner, who asks his teacher to clear up some difficult point, he said: "*And who is my neighbor?*" The lawyer most likely knew, at least in a confused way, what was the teaching of Christ concerning the love that should be borne toward one's neighbor, and knowing that it was different from the narrow-hearted love of the Jews,[1] and that it embraced all men, he thought this an alluring subject on which to tempt Him. Hence he asked: "*Who is my neighbor?*" Christ replied in a parable, thus leaving the answer to the question to be drawn from it both by the lawyer and by the multitude, and of its import and scope there could be no doubt, so clear was the application: "*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead.*"

Jerusalem is situated on one of a chain of hills that rise to a considerable height, some of them being about twenty-three hundred feet above the level of the sea. A main road descends from the city into the valley of the Jordan, passing through

[1]It is well known that the Jews taught that only Jews were their neighbors; as to other peoples, as to foreigners, they had no determinate ideas about them; as a rule they regarded all foreigners as enemies, and it seems they thought it lawful to hate them: "*Thou shalt hate thy enemy.*"

the city of Jericho and continuing thence into the country beyond the river. The stretch of road about eighteen miles in length, from Jerusalem to Jericho, was then infested with robbers, and there was one spot, more notorious than the others for robberies and murders, called, as St. Jerome informs us, *"Adommim,"* or *the place of blood.* As is well known, Judea is a very mountainous country, nearly its whole face being covered with hills, now barren and rocky. There are many fissures in the rocks and many caverns, and in these robbers and assassins find a convenient and safe retreat. Jesus, then, supposes that a man set out from Jerusalem to Jericho. Bear in mind that the scope of the reply of Jesus to the lawyer is to show that any man, be he Jew or Gentile, is our neighbor, and for this reason he does not say that a Jew, but that a certain *man,* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. And what happened? At a certain point in the road a band of robbers came out from their hiding-place and fell upon the unfortunate traveler, stripped him of everything, and not satisfied with this, those rascally marauders covered him with wounds, and, leaving him reeking with blood and half dead in the middle of the road, made away with themselves. The wretched man lay there unable to move or cry for help and expecting that every moment would be his last. Suddenly at no great distance is heard the noise of steps slowly approaching. Who is he? A priest, wrapped in the ample folds of the imposing dress of his class, draws near. He comes closer, bends over the wretched man, takes a look at him, and passes on without stop-

ping, pursuing his way, cold and imperturbable.[1] He utters not a word of sympathy, and deigns not even to cast a look of pity and commiseration upon the miserable man. The priest had barely left when another traveler, a levite,[2] came up, advancing with a slow and measured step, and he, like the priest, glanced at the prostrate man, but, without bending down to relieve him, without even stopping or making an inquiry, passed on with a heedless air and continued his journey. Certainly any one of ordinary humanity would feel his blood boil and his indignation rise within him on witnessing such indifference, or rather such brutal cruelty as was exhibited by the priest and the levite.

Evidently Jesus had two special reasons for exhibiting in these two men an example of indifference and hardness of heart; first, the sacred character of their ministry made it obligatory on the priest and levite to exercise a greater charity than other men, and hence this unfeeling apathy was all the more reprehensible and detestable; next, Jesus wished to lay bare the falsity and hollowness of the religion of the priests and levites of that day, and to show that, while they gave themselves to the material practices of religion, to its ceremonies and ablutions, its sacrifices and long prayers, they wholly lost sight of its heart, which is charity. Jesus also by His words enforced anew

[1]The passage in the Greek text properly means that both the priest and the levite were pursuing their journey, each going in an opposite direction.

[2]When the priest discharged the sacred rites of his offices, the levite assisted him, pretty much in the same way as deacons, subdeacons, and inferior ministers now serve the priest.

the doctrine He so often inculcated, that we must look to the interior, to the heart, and to good works, and not to appearances.

The part that the priest and the levite are made to play in the parable excites contempt; and certainly they never received a more stinging rebuke or one better merited; and we can readily understand how the whole Jewish priesthood and the Pharisees, nearly all of whom were of the same class, felt that the blow was meant for them; and hence they fretted and fumed and swore in their hearts that they would take a savage revenge. And we can now also understand why it was that they flung in the face of Jesus the reproach that He was a Samaritan: "*Do we not say well that Thou art a Samaritan,*" that is, "Thou art a schismatic, a heretic, and an enemy to the Law of Moses?"

The wretched man who had been plundered and wounded lay there on the road, covered with blood and vainly calling for aid. But now comes another traveler, a layman and a Samaritan, riding on a beast. The Samaritans, as you know, and as Christ tells us in explicit terms in His conversation with the Samaritan woman,[1] were unbelievers. They differed in race, in language, and religion from the Jews, who hated them more than they hated the Gentiles, and the most opprobrious insult a Jew could offer to any man was to say to him: "You are a Samaritan."[2] To the Jews the Samaritans were heretics, schismatics, and whatever else worse could be said of them.

[1] iv.

[2] The Jews in Jerusalem said to Jesus: "*Thou art a Samaritan.*"

The Samaritan, Christ says, on arriving at the spot where the miserable man lay across the road, groaning piteously, stopped his animal, threw the reins on his neck, got out of the saddle and went in haste to him; he raised him from the ground, examined his bloody wounds, washed them, poured wine and oil into them,[1] bound them up, and then, lifting him up bodily, set him upon his own beast, and walking beside him and leading the animal, he brought him to an inn, looked after him and saw that he was comfortable in bed. The next day he took out two denarii, about a dollar of our money, and gave them to the host, saying: *"Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, on my return will pay thee."*

There are many observations that might be made here, which the Gospel leaves to be inferred, but which we should carefully note. Jesus wished to give in the Samaritan a pattern of a charitable man, in order thus the better to put the priest and the levite to shame and to show them that they were wholly destitute of charity; He humbled their pride by putting before them a heretic and a layman as an example to be followed.

The Samaritan never looked or inquired to ascertain whether the wounded man was a Samaritan, a Jew, or a Gentile, whether he was a good man or a bad, whether he was rich or poor, grateful or thankless; he saw in him only a man who was suffering and dying; this was enough, and he at once set to work to aid him as best he could;

They thus insulted Him, likely after hearing from Him or from others, who reported it, this parable.

[1]Hebrews, when traveling, often took with them wine and oil as a provision for the journey, or as a medicine.

he spared nothing and cheerfully gave of his money in his behalf. So our charity also, while observing the claims of nature, love, and friendship, should embrace all and exclude none, because all men are created by God and in His image.

The Samaritan was an unbeliever and therefore outside the true religion. In making him a pattern of charity did Jesus wish to sanction error? Did He wish to countenance indifference in religion and to approve that absurd and impious maxim, so common in these days, that all religions are equally good? that it does not matter whether one professes this one or that, provided we are honest and charitable and love one another? To say so, even to think so, would be a horrid blasphemy. If all religions are equally good, why did Jesus Christ come on earth to teach us His? Why did He send the apostles to preach the Gospel everywhere? Why did He not leave all people each in its own religion, the Jews in Judaism, and the Pagans in Paganism? Why did He preach abroad that whosoever would not believe in His doctrine should be condemned? Jesus Christ, then, did not intend by the parable of the Samaritan to teach that all religions are equal, and that He would number among His followers and His sons all those who practised charity, no matter what religion they professed. He praised the charity of the Samaritan and held it up as an example, in precisely the same sense in which He praised the unjust steward and urged his followers to imitate the prudence of the children of darkness. He praised the good work of the Samaritan and pro-

posed him as a model for imitation, not because of the doctrine he professed, but because of the charity he practised; He was silent about the one and lauded the other. He was silent about his belief, because He knew that His hearers held it to be false and that there was no need of warning them against it; He lauded his charity, because of this virtue they were either ignorant, or if not, they were wofully deficient in the practice of it. By this parable Our Lord not only taught that charity, to be truly such, must manifest itself in works, but also, while observing the order prescribed by nature and faith, that all men and men of all nationalities and religions, are to be regarded as our brothers. Every man, be he Turk or Tartar, civilized or barbarian, believer or unbeliever, black or white, is always a man, always a creature of God and our brother, and for him also did Christ die. It is, therefore, our simple duty to aid him according to our means.

One day a poor man came to a certain bishop asking alms. The bishop put a dollar into his hand. The poor man holding the money in his hand and looking at the bishop, said: "Monsignor, do you know that I am an Israelite?" "And what of it?" asked the bishop. "Here, now, is another dollar," and he handed him the money. This bishop knew the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Still, you will say, it is nevertheless true, as appears from the parable, that those who have the true religion and who should practise what it teaches, and, above all, priests and levites, do not do so; whereas the Samaritan, notoriously a here-

tic and schismatic and professing a false religion, did practise perfectly the fundamental precept of charity. How, then, is this manifest contradiction explained? Here, on the one hand, are men who have the true religion and do not its works; and, on the other, here is a man who has a false religion and does the works of the true. Where is the good, then, of having any religion, true or false? It can not be denied that many live in the true religion and profess it in word but deny it in deed, as St. Paul long ago said: *"They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him."* And what of this? An architect may know architecture very well and design a very bad house; should we say, then, that architecture is useless and ought to be cast aside? An advocate has a profound knowledge of the law but he uses his knowledge to harm others and bring discredit upon himself. Shall we say, then, that a knowledge of the law it useless and dangerous? Certainly not. It is good and necessary to know the truth, to know one's duty to God, to one's neighbor, and to one's self, since without this knowledge we can not observe the teachings of truth or do our duty; now all these things religion teaches us and it is a safe and unerring teacher; religion is therefore good and holy and necessary. If many do not observe the teachings of religion, that only proves that man can abuse his liberty, and that, knowing his duty, he spurns it; it only proves that the will can act contrary to the intelligence, and that a man, while knowing the right way, can go the wrong and fall over a precipice. If the argument were good of those who say: "Many pro-

fess religion and live lives as wicked as if they professed none at all;" it might with equal force be retorted: "All men are endowed with reason, and reason teaches them to discharge their natural duties, whereas many pay no attention to such duties; again, many are highly educated, they are men of science, and yet they are wicked; themselves corrupted, they corrupt others; whereas many who can neither read nor write, are excellent citizens and lead virtuous lives; are we, then, to discard reason and contemn knowledge?" This would, of course, be an outrage against reason and against common-sense. Therefore, we must conclude that, if many, while professing the true religion, do wrong and merit condemnation, they do wrong precisely because they do not observe the teachings of religion, and that religion is always good and holy, and they perverse and wicked. Does the sun cease to be of immeasurable benefit to all because a few, through carelessness, or voluntarily, cast themselves over a precipice while it is shining in the heavens?

Still the fact stands, it is urged, that some living in heresy or schism or unbelief practise the virtues as well as do Catholics, and sometimes better, as we are taught by Christ in the parable.

We do not deny it; on the contrary, we freely admit it. But what does it prove? It proves what the Church has always taught and still teaches, namely, that men by the natural powers of nature can do good works in the natural order and merit a natural reward. A man, destitute of Christian faith and outside the Church, can know many truths that are taught in their integrity by the

Catholic Church, and knowing them he may practise them, and such are the good works of heretics, of schismatics, and of unbelievers. The virtues that are practised by those outside the Church are practised by them because and in so far as they have, without knowing it or adverting to it, a knowledge of these virtues from the Church, and hence in so far they are, without knowing it, Catholics. God grant, that appreciating the fruit they may also appreciate the tree, that by practising some of the virtues, they may find a home in the Church which is the mother of all virtues.

Jesus, having finished the parable, turned to the lawyer and said: "*Which of the three,* the priest, the levite, or the Samaritan, *was neighbor to him that fell among robbers?*" There could be no doubt about the answer that Jesus wished to force from the lips of the one that tempted Him. The lawyer replied: "*He that showed mercy to him.*" He did not use the word Samaritan, because it would have abashed him to do so; it would have been a humiliation, and the word would have been like fire upon his tongue; but in substance he said, as he was bound to say, the same thing. "Very well, then," said Jesus; "*Go, and do thou in like manner.* You, a son of Israel, a teacher of the Law, go and imitate the poor Samaritan who, ignorant of the Law of Moses, knew and observed the law which God has written on the hearts of men."

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